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### Community Planning Officials Survey

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## **Survey Report**

April 2018

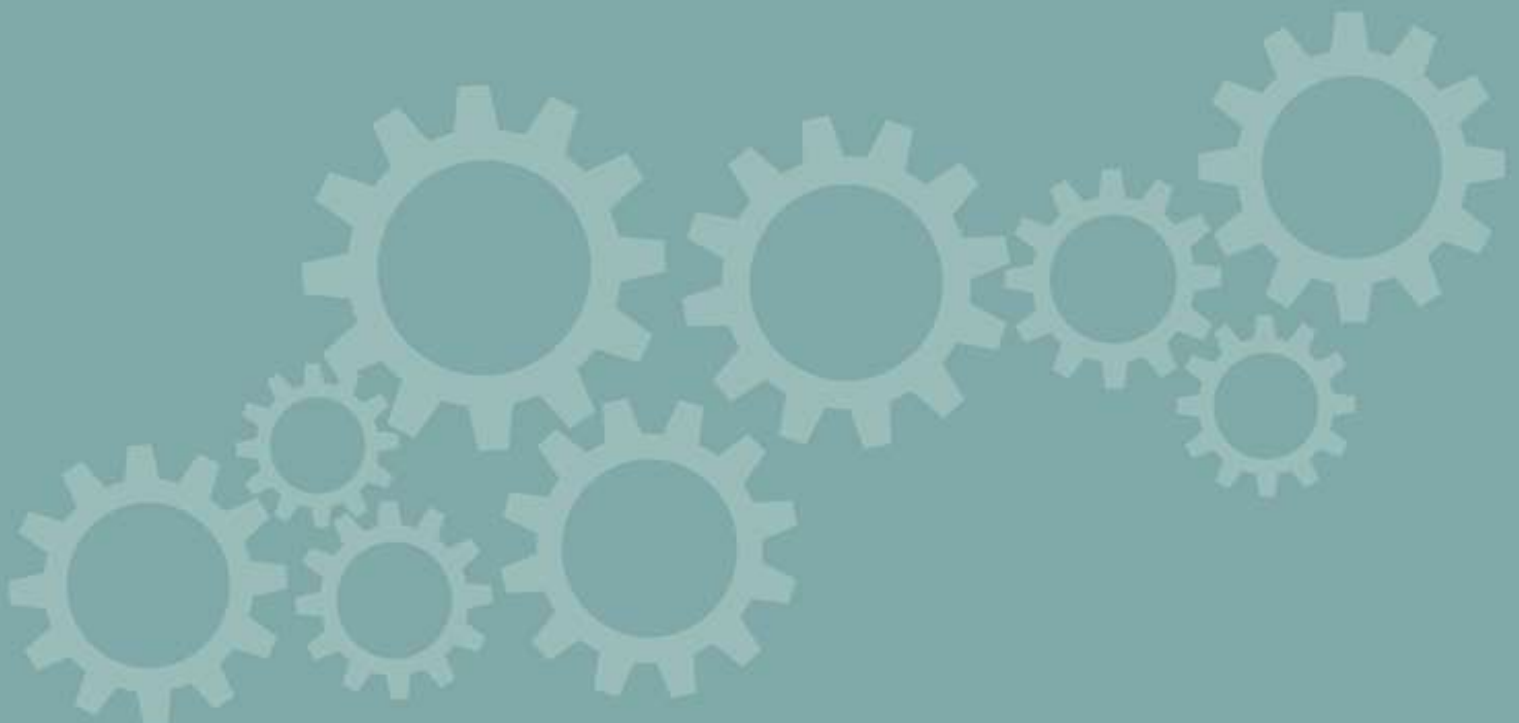
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# Community Planning Officials Survey

*Understanding the everyday work of local  
participatory governance in Scotland*

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Oliver Escobar, Ken Gibb, Mor Kandlik Eltanani  
and Sarah Weakley



**What Works Scotland (WWS)** aims to improve the way local areas in Scotland use evidence to make decisions about public service development and reform. We are working with Community Planning Partnerships involved in the design and delivery of public services (Aberdeenshire, Fife, Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire) to:

- learn what is and what isn't working in their local area
- encourage collaborative learning with a range of local authority, business, public sector and community partners
- better understand what effective policy interventions and effective services look like
- promote the use of evidence in planning and service delivery
- help organisations get the skills and knowledge they need to use and interpret evidence
- create case studies for wider sharing and sustainability

A further nine areas are working with us to enhance learning, comparison and sharing. We will also link with international partners to effectively compare how public services are delivered here in Scotland and elsewhere. During the programme, we will scale up and share more widely with all local authority areas across Scotland.

WWS brings together the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, other academics across Scotland, with partners from a range of local authorities and:

- Glasgow Centre for Population Health
- Improvement Service
- Inspiring Scotland
- IRISS (Institution for Research and Innovation in Social Services)
- NHS Education for Scotland
- NHS Health Scotland
- NHS Health Improvement for Scotland
- Scottish Community Development Centre
- SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)

This is one of a series of papers published by What Works Scotland to share evidence, learning and ideas about public service reform.

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[www.whatworksscotland.ac.uk](http://www.whatworksscotland.ac.uk)

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## Summary of findings and recommendations

Over the years improving community planning partnerships (CPPs) has often meant reforming structures and procedures; the ‘hardware’, to use a computing metaphor. Getting that right is crucial but perhaps the best-known secret in the world of CPPs, and beyond, is that policy, governance and public service successes often hinge on the ‘software’: relationships, mindsets, values and ways of working. Community planning officials (CPOs) operate at the heart of local governance, and therefore this survey sought to explore their views on issues related to both the ‘hardware’ and the ‘software’ of CPPs.

This summary pulls together key findings, analysis and recommendations for policy and practice. We are aware that many CPPs have already made substantial progress to address some of the issues highlighted here. This survey was conducted in the early days the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act and therefore the findings will be of varied relevance to different CPPs. The second wave of the survey, in 2018, will allow us to study more recent developments. The summary includes a range of recommendations collated in a table at the end and referenced in brackets throughout the text, so that it’s easier to check the analysis behind each recommendation.

### Improving the evidence base on the work of community planning

While the response rate was very good (62%), we must note the limitations of this survey, particularly regarding robust statistical analysis on a small sample (n = 107). The survey provides the baseline for a second wave in 2018, which will deepen the analysis. Excepting these shortcomings, we are confident that the report offers a plausible narrative about the state of CP work and CPPs, and we have, whenever possible, cross-checked with other studies (e.g. Audit Scotland, 2006, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016) to place our findings in the context of the existing evidence base.

Despite extensive consultation over the research design, we also recognise that this is a first pass at this type of survey on a group of new policy workers who are not that well-defined, understood or recognised. Mapping the CPOs workforce was particularly challenging [Recommendation 1]. It would be valuable to develop and maintain a national census of all CPOs (managers and officers, at both local and strategic levels), particularly if their views are to be gathered periodically to support public service reform at the frontline.

### Understanding and supporting the community planning workforce

The survey reflects a highly educated workforce with a wide range of professional backgrounds. This diversity is to be expected because CPOs represent a relatively new type of policy worker in the context of Scottish local governance and therefore the pathways into the job are multiple. CPOs can be based in various council departments, depending on local administrative structures and culture. In this sense, they remain an evolving community of practice without a clearly anchored institutional house and professional identity. The extent to which this enables or hinders their capacity to advance CP is a question for further research.

Over half of respondents have been in post for more than four years, and 77% said that they are satisfied with the job, while 14% stated being dissatisfied. This provides a useful baseline for the second survey, when we will also ask for qualitative responses to further unpack job satisfaction.

The CPO role entails multiple aspects, ranked here according to the importance that respondents attributed to the list we provided:

1. Working across various organisational boundaries
2. Involving communities in policy and decision making
3. Planning and managing the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)<sup>1</sup>
4. Encouraging culture change
5. Managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups
6. Working across departmental boundaries in my organisation
7. Performance management and governance
8. Using evidence to support policies and projects

We examined reported effort compared to effort CPOs thought should be put into each of these aspects of their work. The results suggest that respondents thought that more effort should go into involving communities in policy and decision-making, managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups, encouraging culture change, and using evidence to support policies and projects.

A challenging aspect of the CPO role is working at the frontline of public service reform. Survey respondents showed a strong consensus on the importance of fostering culture change in order to accomplish the aims of CP. Culture change work entails balancing competing interests and forging relationships between the multiplicity of actors at play in local governance. Our analysis suggests a strong presence of ‘internal activists’ – i.e. people who are trying to effect change in local governance by developing more collaborative, participative and/or deliberative ways of working (Escobar, 2017a, p. 154).

Previous research has argued that this kind of ‘culture change work’ can put CPOs under intense pressure and at risk of burning out (Escobar, 2017a). The data in this survey, however, does not support the notion of widespread burnout in this cohort of CPOs. Nevertheless, the report shows that they are under considerable pressure as they work at the intersection of strategic policy agendas in Scotland (e.g. public service reform, community empowerment, social justice) and thus monitoring workforce wellbeing should be a consideration in future research.

The survey reflects a highly skilled workforce with competency in a range of engagement and communication skills. These were the skills reported most prominently and valued most highly. These are thus important across the board in CP work, with the relevance of research and management skills being more dependent on specific roles. In terms of training, half said that they ‘had no real training’, while a quarter noted that they learned from documents. Overall, respondents said they would be happy to have more training opportunities [Recommendation 3]. Two areas came up as the most desirable: (1) leadership and management with emphasis on managing change or processes; and (2) mediation and facilitation skills. These were followed by (3) research methods and (4) community engagement skills. Other skills mentioned were (5) monitoring and evaluation, (6) politics and policy training, (7) resource and funding management, (8) media and digital training (emphasising social media), (9) public speaking, and (10) use of evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> The second wave of the survey will introduce the Local Outcome Improvement Plans instead of the SOA.

Although not yet seen amongst the most important skills, developing and/or mobilising evidence plays a prominent role in CP work. CPOs report relying often on evidence obtained through partnership with others, public consultation, government departments and agencies and, to a lesser extent, from internal research in their organisation, professional bodies and academic institutions. Respondents indicated a strong focus on using evidence to assess outcomes, particularly regarding inequalities and, to a lesser extent, on using evidence to assess value for money and achieve outcomes. However, only 33% of respondents indicated that their CPP makes full use of partners' data sources and expertise in data analysis, which indicates underutilised capacity within CPPs. This raises questions about the level of confidence in sharing evidence between CP partners, and merits further research into barriers and enablers [Recommendation 5]. CPPs should consider developing a framework to improve the sharing and using of evidence between CP partners in order to make the most of existing capacity across organisations and sectors.

Half of respondents reported that their CP team has expertise in evaluation. As CP activity gains further prominence with the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act, the role of CPOs in evaluation activity may increase, alongside the need for building capacity or drawing on expertise from other departments. The large majority of respondents agreed that CP could be improved by better use of evidence and evaluation.

Lack of capacity and/or resource to undertake or commission research are reported as the main challenges regarding the use of evidence. Other challenges include lack of buy-in by elected members and officers, which echoes research on the importance of leadership in improving evidence use (Breckon & Dobson, 2016, pp. 20-21). When it comes to using statistical data, the two main challenges are: lack of capacity and/or resource to undertake analysis; and dearth of data at adequate spatial scales. This limited capacity for analytical work can increase the risk of asking the wrong questions, accepting top-down proposals on trust and having insufficient scrutiny of external research. There is scope to improve knowledge mobilisation in CPPs. [Recommendation 3] There should be further support for capacity-building and skills development in CP teams, in particular analytical training, to make effective use of evidence from a range of sources.

All in all, CP entails multi-faceted roles where people learn by doing, through reflective practice and ongoing development as part of a community of practice, in line with research in other contexts (Wenger, 1998; Forester, 1999; Williams, 2012). This highlights the importance of being part of a team with diverse experience and expertise, which is a challenge in small CP teams. It also emphasises the relevance of peer-learning opportunities between CPPs and across a broader network of CPOs throughout the country [Recommendation 4]. The Community Planning Network may consider the scope for developing a stronger sense of shared professional identity across the country, with more training opportunities as well as networking spaces for CPOs to gather and share experiences, challenges and strategies.

## **Improving how community planning partnerships work**

The expectation is that CPPs can provide an effective platform for joint working and decision-making, co-production and governance. This has been a fundamental challenge for CPPs since their inception (Rogers et al., 1999; Scottish Executive, 2001; Stevenson, 2002; Sinclair, 2008, 2011; Scottish Government & COSLA, 2012; Audit Scotland, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2016), with partnership



work across sectoral, organisational and departmental boundaries being inconsistent across the country despite ongoing focus on culture change in the reform of public services.

The survey adds to this evidence base by examining key aspects of the interaction between CP partners. CPP meetings at all levels are reported by survey respondents as spaces where partners share information and, to some extent, coordinate and plan together. In some places, CPPs are also seen as spaces for collaborative decision-making, particularly local forums and area partnerships, and to review each other's initiatives. It is clear, however, that they are not reported as spaces where partnership working entails a great deal of sharing budgets. These findings resonate with Audit Scotland reports regarding, more broadly, the sharing of assets and resources (2013, 2014, 2016).

In terms of inclusion, CPP boards feature strong public and third sector presence and weaker community representation, with only half of the respondents reporting the presence of the latter at their CP board. Finding meaningful ways of representing communities at strategic CP level can be challenging, often due to lack of recognisable and/or legitimate intermediaries. In some places, community councillors can play this role, but the presence and legitimacy of community councils across the country is patchy and contested (Escobar, 2014a; Community Councils Working Group Secretariat, 2012; Bort et al., 2012) [Recommendation 9]. The role of community councils in CPPs, and more broadly in local democracy, should be a central consideration in the forthcoming Local Governance Review<sup>2</sup>, and current research by the Scottish Community Development Centre and What Works Scotland can contribute to inform this work<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, there are a range of other community bodies that can be well placed to support local participation, as argued in our forthcoming report about community anchor organisations (Henderson et al., 2018; Henderson, 2015).

The survey found a high level of elected member representation in CPP boards, sometimes including opposition politicians, which might reflect the reality of coalition and minority administrations across the country. These findings somewhat temper potential critiques of a democratic deficit and disconnection between collaborative governance in CPPs and the representative institutions of local government. However, more research is needed to understand the impact of the role of elected members in CPPs.

The findings above refer to *external inclusion* (i.e. getting a place at the board) but we also explored the level of *internal inclusion* (i.e. having meaningful opportunities to influence deliberation at the board)<sup>4</sup>. We found a mixed response regarding equal opportunity amongst different CP partners to influence the board's decisions, with just under half of respondents agreeing that this is the case in their CPP. Nevertheless, the notion of 'equal opportunity to influence' must be placed in the context of the range of actors represented at the board where disparities may stem from different statutory responsibilities and expertise depending on the issues being discussed. To add nuance, we checked how CPOs saw the role of the third sector (represented at CPP boards by Third Sector Interface (TSI)

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<sup>2</sup> The Local Governance Review was announced in late 2017: <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/local-governance-review/>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wws-and-scdc-collaborating-on-review-of-community-councils-in-scotland/>

<sup>4</sup> Conceptual distinctions adapted from Young (2000).

executives<sup>5</sup>) and 70% responded that they are treated as an equal partner. This is an important finding, with the positive perspective of these CPOs being somewhat at odds with the views of TSI representatives who have been critical of their unequal role in some CPPs (Escobar, 2014b, 2015a). This difference may reflect progress being made or indeed that CPOs may not always be aware of some of these views amongst TSI representatives. In either case CPP boards seem to be doing better in terms of external rather than internal inclusion.

If CP boards are to be meaningful spaces for joint working, decision-making and governance, it is to be expected that interaction at the board should entail robust challenge and scrutiny between partners. Our survey suggests that the level of scrutiny in CP boards is limited, with only 38% of respondents agreeing that it is a place where policies and decisions are properly scrutinised and 12% indicating that there are disagreements at their board. As argued later in the report, the effectiveness of CP meetings should perhaps be evaluated by considering not only how much collaboration takes place but also how much critical deliberation is elicited. In this light, a strategic forum (e.g. board, theme group) is as good as the levels of difference and disagreement it manages to reflect and work through.

From this perspective, partnership work and leadership should entail co-production of policies and services through deliberative engagement with conflicting perspectives, priorities and values (see Bryson et al., 2006; Crosby et al., 2010; Innes & Booher, 2003, 2010; Barnes et al., 2007; Newman & Clarke, 2009). The counterintuitive suggestion here is that meaningful collaboration can be undermined by a lack of safe space for challenge and disagreement. Without this, the work of CPPs may be hindered by forms of ‘apparent consensus’ (Urfalino, 2006) which are detrimental to sound decision-making [Recommendation 6]. CPP boards should investigate how board members see their role and capacity to participate, challenge and influence decisions and, if appropriate, revise working arrangements to enable productive scrutiny and shared decision-making.

A lack of explicit challenge in CP boards doesn’t necessarily mean that productive relationships are prevalent in CPPs. Only 27% of respondents disagreed with the notion that unproductive relationships between CP partners may currently prevent stronger impact by CPPs. Working through these differences should perhaps be one of the functions of CP meetings rather than something expected to be resolved elsewhere without spaces for meaningful dialogue within CPPs. This perhaps translates into lack of buy-in, as reflected in the survey where only 17% of respondents agreed that all partners took the SOA as the key framework to guide their work. The second wave of this survey will check whether the new Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) will fare better in this regard.

The survey also shows that many CPOs perceive a lack of clear vision at senior level with only 30% of respondents agreeing that leadership arrangements across the CPP enhance CP processes. This is an important aspect of CP work that merits further investigation to gain qualitative insights into what is working, and what is not, in terms of leadership – and indeed what types of leadership are conducive to improving outcomes in CPPs. This is a key area to be developed, building on previous

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<sup>5</sup> For an example of how a TSI is dealing with the challenge of representing the third sector in CP see: <http://whatworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk/2016/11/participation-and-representation-in-Scotlands-third-sector-interfaces.html>

research by the Improvement Service (2013) and What Works Scotland<sup>6</sup> (Chapman et al., 2017; Bland, 2017).

Respondents were sceptical about whether all CP partners see the value of partnership work but they were clear in arguing that there is value to it. Indeed, CPOs mentioned a wide range of examples to illustrate the added value of CPPs in achieving positive outcomes across various policy areas. The majority of respondents offered at least one positive comment about added value, mentioning projects to address issues including safety, care for children and the elderly, and support for refugees. These included different programmes, forums and initiatives and noted some tangible benefits to communities. A particularly large number of projects were mentioned in policy areas such as drugs and alcohol, employment and tackling poverty, and some respondents highlighted projects responding to the effects of budget cuts. Other respondents placed added value in the very process of collaboration that leads to implementing projects. For example, they mentioned the contribution of CPPs to community engagement and, in particular, to the development of participatory budgeting processes. Nevertheless, only 53% of CPOs agreed that communities react positively to their work. The added value of CPPs needs to be better understood and communicated within CPPs, across local government and communities, and at national level – for example, by reporting more systematically the collaborative advantages gained through partnership work, as well as specific outcomes for a range of communities of place, practice and interest [Recommendation 14].

## **Improving community engagement in community planning partnerships**

Community engagement has been a recurrent challenge throughout the history of CPPs. The survey indicates that it remains underdeveloped with only 27% of respondents agreeing that community engagement is central to the work of their CPP. This is consistent with findings in previous studies (Cowell, 2004; Sinclair, 2008; Improvement Service & The Consultation Institute, 2014; Audit Scotland, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2016).

A crucial aspect of community engagement in CPPs is the level of connection between local forums (e.g. neighbourhood/area partnerships, community meetings) and strategic forums (e.g. theme groups, board). Only 45% of respondents agreed that priorities from local partnerships and public forums feed clearly into the work of the board. This supports previous critiques of the disjuncture between local CP and strategic decision-making in CPPs (e.g. Audit Scotland, 2016, p. 20; Escobar, 2014c, pp. 204, 214). A clear connection between activity at local and strategic levels is important to ensure that grassroots community engagement has impact on the overall CP agenda (e.g. developing and implementing SOAs/LOIPs). The monitoring of the new LOIPs and Locality Plans should pay particular attention to the level and quality of community engagement in deciding CPP priorities and developing policies and services [Recommendation 10]. This is central to ensure that CPPs function as coherent ‘deliberative systems’ (Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012) capable of working through competing priorities and translating grassroots community engagement into strategic collective

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<sup>6</sup> See also our recent blogpost on facilitative leadership:  
<http://whatworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk/2017/05/facilitative-leadership-involving-citizens-and-communities-in-local-decision-making.html>

action. This is also crucial in ensuring that social inequalities, within and across communities, do not translate into inequalities of power and influence over priorities and decisions.

Although community engagement may not yet be central to how all CPPs work, the survey found a burgeoning field of activity with most respondents being involved in organising participatory processes. The most common types were task groups (80%) and targeted workshops (79%), followed by public meetings (65%), participatory budgeting (55%), and other community forums (44%). We found that the toolbox of CPOs active in organising community engagement is wide-ranging and includes both traditional and innovative approaches. This is a positive finding, insofar it suggests that this cohort of CPOs can facilitate a range of processes, and thus potentially involve a cross-section of the local population – in line with guidance for the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act (Scottish Government, 2016, pp. 27-28).

The survey indicates that traditional processes (i.e. public meetings, task groups, forums, workshops) are more common than democratic innovations such as participatory budgeting or mini-publics<sup>7</sup>. This may change as a result of the Community Choices programme, with £4.7 million invested so far (Scottish Government, 2017) and the recent landmark agreement between COSLA and the Scottish Government to allocate at least 1% of local government budgets via participatory budgeting by 2021<sup>8</sup>. The second wave of this survey should pick up on the effects of these policies in terms of boosting the community engagement credentials of CPPs.

Participation by established community representatives or intermediaries is more common in CPPs than direct citizen participation. From a democratic equality perspective, it is important that CPPs do not rely solely on associative models, which assume that existing groups and organisations can represent the diverse views of citizens and communities. In this light, community engagement in CPPs should include opportunities for direct participation by citizens who do not see themselves represented by existing intermediaries. This seems to be taking place to some extent in some CPPs through participatory budgeting, community forums, public meetings and citizens' panels and juries.

Only 42% of CPOs reported that they work with elected members to organise community engagement, which suggests some disconnect between participatory processes and representative institutions. The risk of this disconnect is that it can increase public cynicism and the trust gap between citizens and representatives, and communities and institutions. Potential frictions between representative, participatory and deliberative models of local democracy must be addressed, otherwise the risk is that party politics and electoral dynamics can jeopardise community engagement processes (e.g. Escobar, 2017a, pp. 150-154). There are ways of making these models of democracy work well together (Escobar, 2017b), but this issue has been hardly addressed in the CP context (for notable exceptions see Improvement Service, 2013; Improvement Service & The Consultation Institute, 2014).

Almost half of respondents agreed that community engagement has influence on policies and services. This connects to the earlier point about public cynicism but also points to the risk that findings generated through community engagement (e.g. drawing on local and experiential

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<sup>7</sup> For examples of, and resources on, mini-publics please see <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/mini-publics/>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://news.gov.scot/news/more-choice-for-communities>

knowledge) may not always be given meaningful consideration as part of the evidence base for deliberation and decision-making [Recommendation 11]. Community participation in CPPs should be more coherently and transparently linked to decision-making, including clarity of purpose regarding the type of process and level of power-sharing at stake (e.g. consultation, co-production, delegation).

The National Standards for Community Engagement are known by virtually all CPOs and widely used by a majority to guide the implementation and evaluation of processes or to inform local policies and frameworks. When asked about key challenges in community engagement, respondents discussed public fatigue regarding inconsequential consultations as well as shortcomings in the quality of processes, and aspirations for more meaningful and inclusive forms of participation.

Some doubted the feasibility of involving communities due to lack of resources and capacity in CP teams. Over a third of respondents said that these processes are organised drawing on in-house expertise at the council, with just under a third saying that they outsource to the third sector. Therefore, a majority (69%) of community engagement processes are reported to be delivered by CP partners. Only 9% of respondents indicated that this work is mainly outsourced to the private sector, in contrast to other countries where there is a growing 'industry of participation' increasingly populated by for-profit companies (e.g. Lee, 2015). There is some debate about the advantages and disadvantages of deploying in-house expertise versus hiring external consultants (Escobar, 2017a, pp. 158-159) and this depends on local circumstances, quality of contracting and monitoring, and issues about loss of direct control and engagement. Understanding these trade-offs in the context of CPPs requires further research.

Given that recent policies and legislation place community engagement at the heart of CP, it is important that this is supported by properly resourced teams of participation practitioners and community organisers within the ranks of the CPP. An ongoing evaluation of participatory budgeting activity in Scotland indicates that new engagement processes are being added to existing staff workloads without investing in additional capacity (O'Hagan et al., 2017, p. 17) [Recommendation 12]. Improving the level and quality of public participation in CP requires building capacity to carry out this work, and thus CPPs should review whether community engagement teams are adequately resourced and supported to fulfil the expectations of their communities and the Community Empowerment Act.

Most respondents (72%) indicated that the Community Empowerment Act has the potential to improve CP and, although not all were clear about the implications for their work<sup>9</sup>, only 23% felt unprepared to implement it. Key concerns regarding implementation related to: the level of cooperation from CP partners (*"I am worried they expect the Council, and my team, to do it all"*); the development of locality plans that ensure positive outcomes; the management of expectations in relation to asset transfer; and the capacity of communities to engage, particularly regarding new demands on a small and overstretched number of community representatives and intermediaries.

One of the most important areas of concern is the risk of further empowering the already powerful, i.e. communities characterised by high social capital or a mobilised and resourceful citizenry, which

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<sup>9</sup> This uncertainty may be explained by the timing of this survey (early 2016) which coincided with the interim period between the legislation being passed and the implementation guidance being issued.

can further exacerbate current inequalities between communities (see Improvement Service, 2015 for an overview of social inequalities in Scotland). Accordingly, as a CPO put it, there is a concern about having adequate resources to be able “to support communities in deprived areas to take full advantage of the rights given to them in the Act” [Recommendation 13]. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act should pay close attention to the extent to which it contributes to reducing, increasing or reproducing existing inequalities at local level and across Scotland.

## Improving local governance, advancing public service reform

CPOs work at the frontline of public service reform in Scotland, seeking to drive change on the ground. This section concludes the summary with notes about how CPOs relate to key aspects of this reform agenda, and offers reflections on the broader context for the development of CPPs as institutions for local governance.

Most survey respondents reported that the *Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services* (see Christie, 2011) guides their work, particularly in four areas: shifting attention towards prevention; providing a focus on tackling inequalities; fostering collaboration between CP partners; and encouraging communities to “take greater control over the local agenda and the development of services designed to meet local needs”. Most respondents were also acquainted with the National Performance Framework, which was seen as useful. A minority of CPOs were involved in another aspect of the reform agenda, namely, the integration of health and social care. There were mixed views on whether integration is well coordinated with CPP work; just over half of the respondents agreed that integration is progressing well in their area, with a small percentage disagreeing.

We also asked CPOs about the effect of funding cuts on CPPs and public services. The majority agreed that funding cuts are having negative effects on the relationship between local public services and communities. We also found that more CPOs agreed with the statement that ‘funding cuts are stopping partners from sharing budgets’ (45%) than disagreed (18%). This finding, however, must be placed in the context of earlier analysis by Audit Scotland (2006, 2011) which shows little evidence of joint working and budget-sharing being prevalent in CPPs prior to the financial crisis, austerity policies or funding cuts.

The findings in this report, alongside the broader evidence base, suggest that CPPs are not yet seen as established institutions for local governance on key policy areas. Half of the survey respondents agreed that decisions are usually being made elsewhere and not in CPP meetings, and only 25% disagreed with this statement. CPPs are often seen by CP partners as ‘secondary arenas’ for policy and decision-making (Escobar, 2015a) with core business being carried out elsewhere (e.g. through bilateral engagement). CPPs thus function more as spaces for sharing information, and planning and coordinating initiatives, than as key sites for co-production and shared decision-making. This seems at odds with the perspective of elected members as reflected in a survey where the majority of councillors (69%) felt that “all local public services should be accountable for the delivery of shared outcomes through the local Community Planning Partnerships” (Improvement Service, 2013, p. 5) [Recommendation 7]. CP partners should clarify the scope for co-production and shared decision-making at their CPP in order to increase transparency about what issues and priorities are within, or beyond, their shared remit. This is in line with guidance to implement the Community Empowerment Act (Scottish Government, 2016, pp. 29-30). The implementation of Local Outcome



Improvement Plans and Locality Plans is an opportunity to clarify how, and to what extent, power is being shared and services are being co-produced.

CP policy in Scotland aims to improve local outcomes by reconfiguring local governance through collaboration and participation. On the ground, CPOs face the challenges of turning CPPs into more than “a façade for the same old practices” (Gilchrist, 2003, p. 39). Encouraging CP partners to share resources and power can be an uphill struggle, and one that some CPOs do not shy away from (e.g. Escobar, 2017a, 2014c). In this context, fostering collaboration entails the risk of “bracketing social, political and organisational inequalities” which “tends to work to the advantage of dominant groups and larger organisations, and to privilege certain forms of expertise, language and claims to legitimacy” (Newman & Clarke, 2009, p. 60; Barnes, 2009, p. 36). Partnership meetings can sometimes reproduce such inequalities rather than question them and that throws the relevance of robust deliberation into relief. CPPs should examine the extent to which they constitute effective ‘deliberative systems’ where different meetings and forums, from the local to the strategic, are coherently linked and feature high quality deliberation throughout [Recommendation 8].

Deliberation is a form of communication that can support robust decision-making and governance (Escobar, 2011; Roberts & Escobar, 2015; Escobar & Elstub, 2017; Fung, 2004; Dryzek, 2010).

*Deliberative quality* matters because assessing CPPs according to deliberative standards can help to ensure that priorities and services are being developed on the basis of:

- critical engagement with the best available evidence<sup>10</sup>
- inclusion of diverse perspectives that can shed light on the issue at hand
- respectful dialogue that enables working through differences and disagreements, including productive exchanges of reasons, emotions and values
- and conclusions/recommendations/decisions that reflect informed and considered judgement.

The Community Empowerment Act gives CPPs the strongest statutory basis since their inception [Recommendation 2]. Future research must assess the impact of this legislation on transforming CPPs into spaces for *participatory governance* – i.e. governance through partnership across sectors and organisations, underpinned by meaningful and consequential participation by citizens and communities of place, practice and interest.

Arguably, if CPPs did not exist, some other form of partnership arrangement would still be required in order to cope with the contemporary challenges of governance, policymaking and service delivery. As noted later in this report, shifts towards collaborative and participative forms of governance are an international phenomenon related to the transformation of public administrations in democratic systems around the world. Therefore, CPOs are not only at the frontline of public service reform in Scotland but are part of a new group of policy workers facing the global challenge of helping to reinvent local governance for the decades ahead. CPOs’ perspectives, as shown in this report, help us to understand how key policy agendas (i.e. social justice, community empowerment, public service reform) can be translated into everyday practices that seek to improve lives and communities through collective action.

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<sup>10</sup> By evidence we mean a broad range of sources of research as well as local and experiential knowledge.

## Summary of recommendations

### Developing resources and evidence to support the work of CPPs

**Recommendation 1.** It would be valuable to develop and maintain a national census of all CPOs (managers and officers, both local and strategic levels), particularly if their views are to be gathered periodically to support public service reform at the frontline.

**Recommendation 2.** Future research must assess the impact of the Community Empowerment Act on transforming CPPs into spaces for participatory governance – i.e. governance through partnership across sectors and organisations, underpinned by meaningful and consequential participation by citizens and communities of place, practice and interest.

### Staff development and support

**Recommendation 3.** There should be further support for capacity-building and skills development in CP teams, in particular analytical training, to make effective use of evidence from a range of sources. Other skills in high demand amongst CPOs relate to leadership and facilitation. There is therefore scope for a national programme to support professional development and peer learning.

**Recommendation 4.** The Community Planning Network may consider the scope for developing a stronger sense of shared professional identity across the country, with more training opportunities as well as networking spaces for CPOs to gather and share experiences, challenges and strategies.

### Improving deliberative quality in CPPs

**Recommendation 5.** CPPs should consider developing a framework to improve the sharing and using of evidence between CP partners in order to make the most of existing capacity across organisations and sectors.

**Recommendation 6.** CPP boards should investigate how board members see their role and capacity to participate, challenge and influence decisions and, if appropriate, revise working arrangements to enable productive scrutiny and shared decision-making.

**Recommendation 7.** CP partners should clarify the scope for shared decision-making at their CPP in order to increase transparency about what issues and priorities are within, or beyond, their shared remit. The implementation of Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Plans is an opportunity to clarify how, and to what extent, power is being shared and services are being co-produced.

**Recommendation 8.** CPPs should examine the extent to which they constitute effective ‘deliberative systems’ where different meetings and forums, from the local to the strategic, are coherently linked



and feature high quality deliberation throughout.

### **Participation and engagement**

**Recommendation 9.** The role of community councils in CPPs, and more broadly in local democracy, should be a central consideration in the forthcoming Local Governance Review.

**Recommendation 10.** The monitoring of the new LOIPs and Locality Plans should pay particular attention to the level and quality of community engagement in deciding CPP priorities and developing policies and services.

**Recommendation 11.** Community participation in CPPs should be more coherently and transparently linked to decision-making, regardless of the type of process and level of power-sharing at stake (e.g. consultation, co-production, delegation).

**Recommendation 12.** Improving the level and quality of public participation in CP requires building capacity to carry out this work, and thus CPPs should review whether engagement teams are adequately resourced and supported to fulfil the expectations of their communities and the Community Empowerment Act.

### **Impact on communities and inequalities**

**Recommendation 13.** Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act should pay close attention to the extent to which it contributes to reduce, increase or reproduce existing inequalities at local level and across Scotland.

**Recommendation 14.** The added value of CPPs needs to be better understood and communicated within CPPs, across local government and communities, and at national level – for example, by reporting more systematically the collaborative advantages gained through partnership work, as well as specific outcomes for a range of communities of place, practice and interest.

## Introduction: CPOs in context

Community planning officials constitute a key group of local public servants in Scotland. They work across a broad range of key policy areas, from the environment, to regeneration, equalities, housing, planning, transport, community development, and health and social care, to name a few. They are at the forefront of advancing the agenda laid out by the 2011 *Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services*, as well as legislation such as the 2015 *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act*. In sum, they carry out the everyday work of enabling local participatory governance in Scotland, at the interface of three crucial policy agendas: public service reform, social justice and community empowerment.

Yet, despite their crucial role in local governance, we know surprisingly little about this community of practice. This report presents the findings of the first survey of community planning officials (managers and officers) conducted in Scotland. Its purpose is to reflect their perspectives on a range of topics including:

- The role of community planning officials (henceforth **CPOs**)
- Key dynamics in community planning partnerships (henceforth **CPPs**)
- The use of evidence in community planning (henceforth **CP**)
- Community engagement in CP
- Policies, frameworks and reforms shaping CP
- CP achievements and challenges

The survey also acts as a baseline for a second survey that will allow us to conduct longitudinal analysis in 2018.

Participatory governance has become a prominent field of research and practice (Fung & Wright, 2001; Gaventa, 2004; Warren, 2009) and entails the combination of multi-stakeholder collaboration and public participation. This is reflected in growing international experimentation with new forms of governance and engagement (Elstub & Escobar, 2018; Osborne & Brown, 2013; Osborne, 2010). In Scotland, local participatory governance is articulated through community planning (CP) policy, which mandates local authorities to develop partnerships where various sectors and organisations engage in collaborative policymaking and service design and delivery. Central to this agenda is the involvement of citizens and communities through an increasing number of participatory processes (Scottish Government, 2016; Audit Scotland, 2013, 2014).

Collaborative partnerships and community engagement processes are presented across the world as strategies to counter democratic deficits, deal with complex issues, increase problem-solving capacity, foster social capital, improve public services and restore legitimacy to governance processes (Fischer, 2000; Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002; Fung, 2004; De Souza Briggs, 2008; Sirianni, 2009; Torfing & Triantafillou, 2011). Some of these expectations and aspirations are embodied in the development of CP in Scotland.

Over the last two decades, moulded through a series of pilots, reforms, policy frameworks and evaluations (Campbell, 2015), CP has become integral to how Scottish governments of various political stripes have envisioned the future of local governance and public service reform (Audit Scotland, 2013; Carley, 2006). Structures have evolved, but the basic blueprint remains. There are 32

community planning partnerships (CPPs), one per local authority area. Although they vary, each CPP has a board and various thematic and executive groups, which typically bring together representatives from the council, National Health Service, third sector, police, emergency services, business, education and community organisations. In addition, there is local community planning, usually organised through neighbourhood partnerships or local area partnerships and various satellite public forums which work closer to communities of place.

In this context, CP policy has generated a new group of officials in charge of facilitating partnership activity and community engagement processes (Escobar, 2017a). These are the community planning officials (CPOs) surveyed in this report. They can be seen as a new breed of policy worker in Scotland, insofar as they often combine some of the new roles mapped in the public administration literature, including:

- *boundary-spanners* (Williams, 2012) – practitioners who foster collaboration by working across, and seeking to transcend, various organisational and policy boundaries
- *deliberative practitioners* (Forester, 1999) and *public engagers* (Escobar, 2017a, 2015b) – practitioners who work to involve communities of place, practice and interest in dialogue and deliberation as part of policymaking and/or governance processes
- and *knowledge brokers* (Ward et al., 2009) – practitioners who connect various sorts of evidence to policy and practice.

The CPOs' world has been explored qualitatively using case studies and ethnographic approaches (e.g. Cowell, 2004; Sinclair, 2011; Matthews, 2012; Audit Scotland, 2014; Escobar, 2017a, 2014c). The survey reported here builds on previous work and seeks to gather the perspectives of CPOs across Scotland. Therefore, the survey makes a distinctive contribution because we can draw on a rigorous review of the views and experiences of a large sample of the Scottish CP workforce. It is also an important addition because it takes place at a time of major change and pressure on local governance, public services and community wellbeing.

## Methodological notes: Who participated?

In this section, we highlight key features of the development, sampling and response rates of the survey. The principal objectives of the research were, firstly, to produce a baseline survey of the CP workforce, and secondly, to address key issues facing CPOs and CPPs by elucidating the views of practitioners on important strands of work.

The questionnaire was developed by the authors drawing on previous research (e.g. Audit Scotland, 2014, 2013, 2011, 2006; Sinclair, 2011; Cowell, 2004; Escobar, 2017a, 2015b, 2015a, 2014c) and developing new questions in collaboration with stakeholders from the public and third sectors (see Acknowledgements section). It was then refined after piloting with four CPOs (two managers and two officers).

Reaching survey participants entailed three steps. Firstly, we sought contact details for the 32 CP managers through online searches and we cross-checked this with a list provided by the Scottish Government. Secondly, we contacted CP managers by email and asked them to identify their core CP team defined as “staff who work for at least 50% of their time on CP, either at local or strategic level.” This generated a census of 171 officials whose core job was CP. Finally, we emailed them and explained the purpose of the research, and that their participation was voluntary and anonymous.

The project obtained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee at the School of Social and Political Science of the University of Edinburgh. The survey was conducted online, using *SurveyExpression* software, and was open between December 2015 and March 2016. There were three rounds of reminders, two for all participants and one additional round targeting CP teams with a response rate below 40%.

We received a total of 107 individual responses, which represents a response rate of 62%. The responses included participants from 29 CPPs, out of 32 across Scotland. Of the 107 respondents:

- 39% were men and 61% women (n=104)
- In terms of age group (n=102)
  - 20% were 21-35 years old,
  - 46% were 36-50 years old,
  - and 36% were 51-65 years old.

Table 1 reflects that the majority of participants held the title of CP Manager or CP Officer, but it also shows the variety of titles that can be found in CP teams across the country.

**Table 1. Current position (n = 107)**

Community Planning Manager	30	28%
Community Planning Officer	30	28%
Area Partnership Manager	7	6%
Local Community Planning Officer	6	6%
Community Engagement Manager	5	5%
Community Engagement Officer	5	5%

Service Manager	4	4%
Area Partnership Officer	4	4%
Corporate and Policy Officer	4	4%
Corporate and Policy Manager	3	3%
Neighbourhood Partnership Manager	2	2%
Analyst	2	2%
Liaison Officer	2	2%
Neighbourhood Partnership Officer	1	1%
Other	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

We sought to group these different positions according to two binary categories for analytical purposes (drawing on Escobar, 2014c). The first category alludes to seniority and distinguishes between CPOs working in management positions and those working at officer level. The second category alludes to the location and level of operation of the CPO (local vs. strategic). Local CPOs may be based in local areas or neighbourhoods (e.g. community centres) and operate more often in the context of local CPP forums. In turn, strategic CPOs tend to be based at council headquarters and operate more often at the level of the CPP board and theme groups.

**Figure 1. Position categories (n = 103)**



As shown in Figure 1, our sample includes an equal split between managers and officers while the balance between CPOs working at local and strategic level seems skewed in favour of the latter. However, the extent of the skew is difficult to ascertain as we do not have data about CPOs who didn't complete the survey, and the actual proportion of local vs. strategic is unknown. This skew may also be a result of our inclusion criteria and outreach strategy.

Moreover, these binary categories (managers/officers and strategic/local) can be problematic due to possible overlap. For example, a CPO may be based at strategic level at council headquarters and nonetheless carry out the bulk of her work in local communities; while a community-based CPO may

often work at the strategic level of the CPP (i.e. theme groups, resource and planning groups). By the same token, a CP officer may have managerial responsibilities over sub-teams.

We developed these categories on the basis of the title given by respondents when asked about their position, and this means using judgement based on our understanding of CPPs, which leaves room for inaccurate interpretations. Therefore, although we believe these categories help us to conduct some useful analyses in the report, these caveats must be taken into account when reading our tentative conclusions.

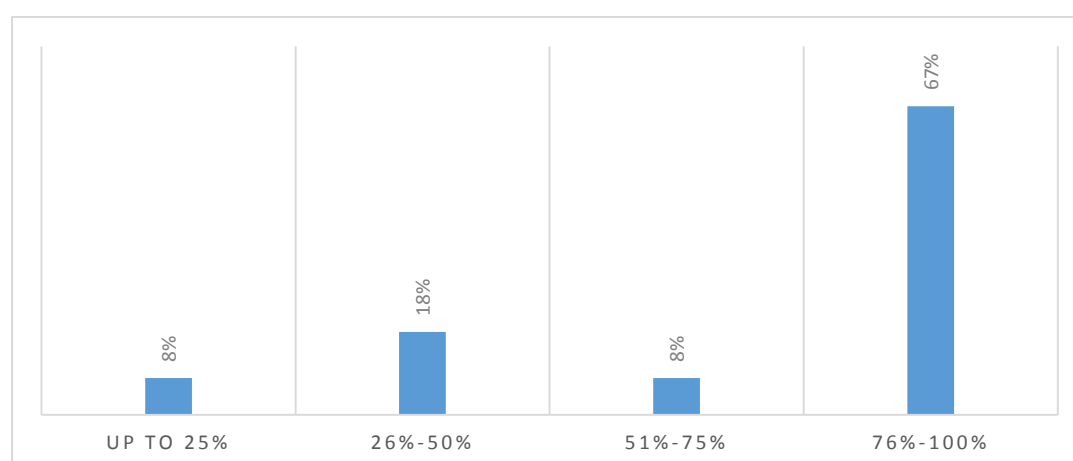
**Table 2. What aspect of the Community Planning Partnership are you most involved with? (multiple choice) (n = 107)**

Board	55	51%
Theme Groups	63	59%
Area Partnerships	50	47%
Local Forums	41	38%
Resource & Planning Groups	26	24%

Table 2 shows that respondents operate across the full range of CPP structures and groups, categorised in five types (although labels and composition may vary across the country), including:

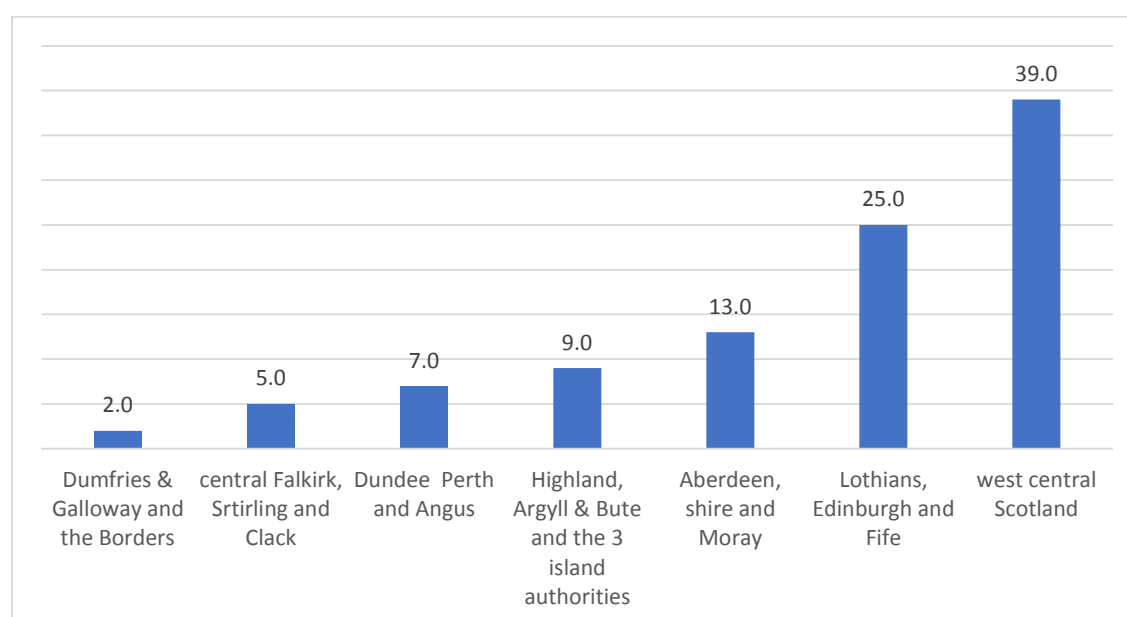
- a) CPP Board, populated by senior representatives from public, third and community sector organisations.
- b) Theme Groups, which are organised around specific policy and service areas and priorities at the strategic level of the CPP and include representatives from organisations working on related issues.
- c) Area Partnerships, which cover smaller geographic areas within the CPP, and are populated by local representatives from public, third and community sector organisations.
- d) Local Forums; these are less formal than the groups already referred to and are usually organised around specific issues and timeframes, and populated by a range of local representatives, groups and residents.
- e) Resource and Planning Groups, these operate at mid-strategic level of the CPP and are usually populated by operational managers from the public and third sectors working on issues related to resourcing, planning and managing various aspects of CPP activity.

**Figure 2. What percentage of your position is defined as Community Planning related? (n = 103)**



The majority of respondents (75%) work on CP more than 50% of their time. There is a 25% of respondents who don't meet this threshold, and this may reflect that in some places the CP team is small and core staff work part-time. We included these responses in the sample, despite not meeting initial inclusion criteria, in order to avoid excluding CPOs who may be central to a small CP team despite not meeting the threshold. In doing so, we relied on the collaboration of CP managers who were asked to identify their core team.

**Figure 3. Geographic distribution of respondents (percentages)**



As noted earlier, there were individual responses from across 29 CPPs. To preserve the anonymity of respondents while still getting a sense of geographic distribution, we aggregated responses as seen in Figure 3. The larger number of responses from some geographic areas, such as the two main central Scotland conurbations, reflects the larger size of their CP teams.

Beyond the limitations already noted, there are three further caveats about the survey:

- Gathering a census of CPOs was very challenging. For example, it was often difficult to define who is in the CP team. We enlisted the help of CP managers in defining their core teams, and we

specified inclusion criteria to ensure that, for most respondents, at least 50% of their time was spent on CP, thus constituting their core job. But this excludes a range of practitioners who fall below that threshold and yet may be central to a CP team. In addition, the turnaround in the workforce meant that existing contact lists sometimes became quickly obsolete even during the three-month period of the survey, particularly in areas with small CP teams.

- Despite extensive consultation over questionnaire design, population sampling and maximising of responses, we recognise that this is a first pass at this survey and represents, crucially, a focus on a group of new policy workers who are not that well-defined, understood or recognised.
- While the response rate was good (62%), we recognise its statistical limitations in terms of undertaking more complex analysis than what is possible in this report. However, there is much basic analysis that can be done here to yield some initial relevant findings. This survey is also the basis for a subsequent second wave survey which will allow us to deepen the analysis.

**Please note** that throughout the report decimal points have been rounded to the nearest percentage point and thus may not always add up to 100% exactly.



## Understanding the CP workforce

The survey reflects a highly educated workforce. Of the 90 respondents who filled in their formal education level, 50% hold undergraduate university degrees, 33% have postgraduate degrees and 17% various further education diplomas and certificates. The range of academic disciplines is varied including, for example, management, policy, business, environment, law, community education and development, tourism, economics, psychology, politics, history, engineering, sports, language, music and social science.

In terms of work experience and trajectory prior to their CP role, respondents provided a wide range of qualitative responses that resist categorisation. This includes professional areas as varied as corporate services, community development, education, safety, policing, research, arts, health, housing, engineering, planning, equality, regeneration, criminal justice and youth work.

This diversity of educational and professional backgrounds is to be expected, given that CPOs represent a relatively new type of policy worker in the context of Scottish local governance and therefore the pathways into the job are multiple. It's not that partnership and engagement work didn't happen before CPOs existed, but rather that these functions are now differentiated and allocated to dedicated staff who work across the boundaries of multiple policy areas covered by the CPP.

CPOs are typically council staff, mainly because up until recently only local government had the statutory duty to develop CP – the Community Empowerment Act 2015 now broadens the sharing of this duty. Nevertheless, CP teams differ in terms of which part of the council hosts them (see Table 3) and thus can be found across departments depending on local administrative structures and culture.

**Table 3. Which department are you in? (n = 107)**

Corporate Services	21%
Chief Executive	19%
Community Learning and Development or similar	14%
More than one department, or other	11%
Communities	10%
Policy & Performance	8%
Democratic Services	7%
Regeneration	6%
Education	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

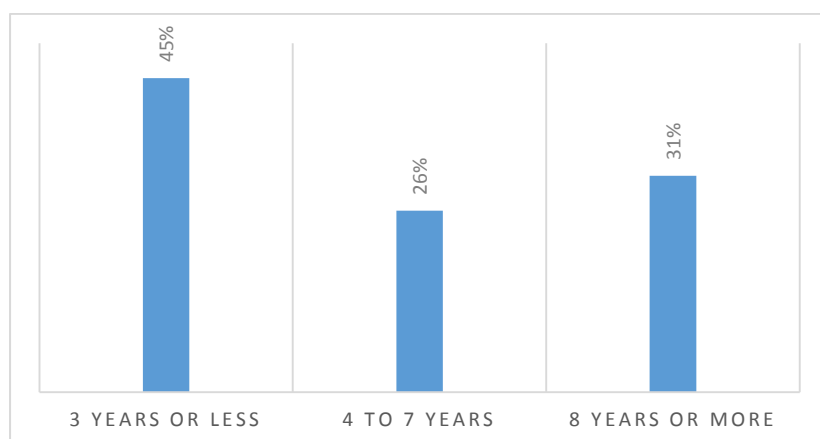
There doesn't yet seem to be a natural institutional space for CP teams. This resonates with previous research in Scotland (e.g. Escobar, 2014c, Chapter 4) and more broadly in the public administration literature, regarding the predicament of a new generation of policy workers (boundary-spanners,

deliberative practitioners, knowledge brokers, etc) whose cross-cutting roles defy established departmental boundaries and functions (e.g. Williams, 2012; Newman, 2012; Durose et al., 2016).

It is debatable the extent to which this variation in localisation may be problematic. Because their job requires fostering collaboration across policy areas, organisations and communities, arguably, if they were to be pigeonholed, their capacity may be reduced. On the other hand, a lack of clear departmental identity and a sense of weak institutional integration for CP functions, can also result in frustration and burnout for some CPOs (e.g. Escobar, 2017a). It can be argued that CPOs remain an emerging and evolving 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998) without a clearly anchored institutional house and professional identity (Escobar, 2014c, Chapter 4).

The majority of survey respondents (88%, n=106) hold permanent positions. We cannot establish how many part-time CP workers are in temporary contracts, as this research did not seek to reach them. Our data suggests that the bulk of the CP workforce have a stable contractual situation. However, in the Collaborative Action Research strand of the What Works Scotland programme we have found some qualitative evidence of job insecurity, and the second wave of this survey will explore this.

**Figure 4. How long have you been in your current post? (n = 103)**



Around 57% of respondents have been in post for more than four years which suggests a relatively established cohort of policy workers whose formation coincides with the aftermath of key milestones in the development of national CP policy (e.g. Concordat and Single Outcome Agreement (SOA); Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services). We didn't find significant differences in tenure between managers and officers, or between CPOs working at strategic or local levels.

When asked about their job satisfaction (n=105), 77% of respondents said that they are satisfied in their job (35% fairly satisfied; 34% very satisfied; 8% completely satisfied) while 14% stated they are dissatisfied (11% fairly dissatisfied; 2% very dissatisfied; 1% completely dissatisfied) and 8% said 'neither.' This data provides a baseline for the second wave of the survey when we may also be able to compare to job satisfaction in other workforces.

## Understanding the work of CPOs

In this section, we explore how CPOs see their role, what practices make up their work and what skills are involved.

### About the role

The survey checked to what extent CPOs' roles can be understood with reference to new profiles of policy worker from the public administration literature, as noted earlier:

- *Boundary-spanners* (Williams, 2012) – practitioners who foster collaboration by working across, and seeking to transcend, organisational and policy boundaries
- *Deliberative practitioners* (Forester, 1999) and *public engagers* (Escobar, 2017a, 2015b) – people who work to involve communities of place, practice and interest in dialogue and deliberation as part of policymaking and/or governance processes
- *Knowledge brokers* (Ward et al., 2009) – people who work to connect various sorts of evidence to policy and practice.

**Table 4. Most important aspects of community planning work (n = 103)**

Percentages indicate proportion of respondents who consider that practice as one of the top three aspects of their work.

Working across various organisational boundaries	62%
Involving communities in policy and decision making	50%
Planning and managing the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)	38%
Encouraging 'culture change'	31%
Managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups	30%
Working across departmental boundaries in my organisation	29%
Performance management and governance	26%
Using evidence to support policies and projects	23%

Table 4 aggregates responses to the question 'What are the three most important aspects of your work?' Three aspects top the list, namely: boundary spanning (across organisational boundaries), facilitating participatory processes, and planning and managing the SOA. (The second wave of the survey will introduce the Local Outcome Improvement Plans instead of the SOA). Of the profiles found in the literature, the knowledge brokering role (using evidence to support policies and projects) was the least prominent amongst respondents. We will return to this when discussing skills in doing research and using evidence.

We didn't find statistically significant differences between officers and managers in terms of the prominence of these roles (see Table A in Appendix). When testing for differences between CPOs working at local and strategic levels we found a limited number of statistically significant differences (see Table A in Appendix). For example, 'performance management and governance' and 'planning and managing the SOA' were more important to CPOs working at strategic level. In turn, 'working across departmental boundaries' and 'involving communities in policy and decision-making', were more central to CPOs working at local level. The latter may indicate some level of disconnect between processes where communities are involved locally, and the strategic decision-making processes of the CPP – a critique that resonates with findings in previous studies (Audit Scotland, 2014, 2013; Escobar, 2014c, pp. 204, 214).

We examined reported effort compared to effort CPOs thought should be put into each of these aspects of their work<sup>11</sup>. The results suggest that respondents thought that more effort should go into involving communities in policy and decision-making, managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups, encouraging culture change, and using evidence to support policies and projects (see Figures 17-22 in Appendix). However, the differences were not statistically significant. We also tested for differences between strategic/local CPOs, and managers/officers (see Table D in Appendix). We found that most differences were non-significant, with two exceptions:

- *Working across departmental boundaries in my organisation*: Officers said that they should put more time and energy into this while managers said that they put more time and energy than they should.
- *Involving communities in policy and decision-making*: Both managers and officers said that they should put more time and energy into this, but officers more so. CPOs working at both strategic and local levels said they should put more time and energy into this, but the difference is larger for CPOs in strategic positions.

The lack of statistical significance is likely the result of study effects. The small sample in this survey limits the statistical power of these tests, and therefore these results should be taken simply as indicative of areas that may merit further research.

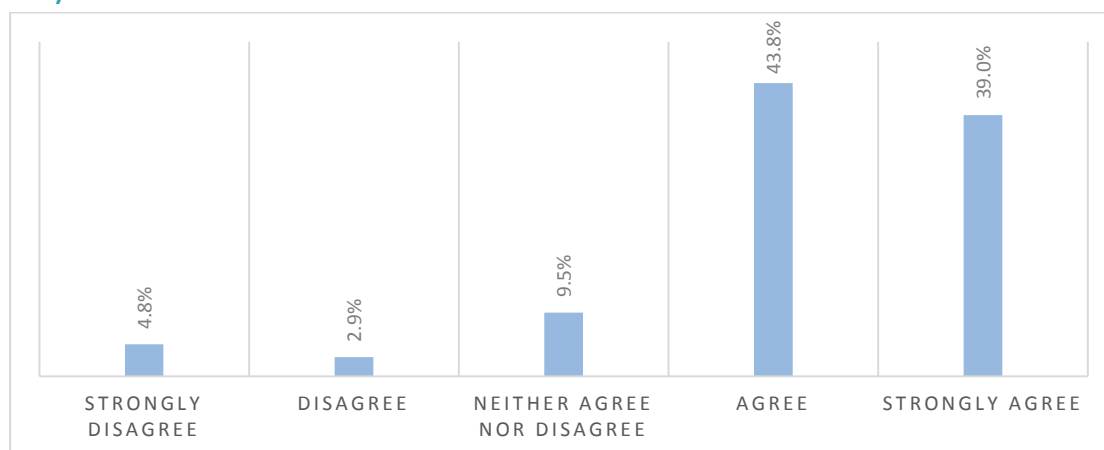
## Culture change work

Since the mid 1990s, CP has been seen by successive governments as a key vehicle for public service reform in Scotland and, in particular, to transition towards more open, collaborative and participative forms of local governance (Cowell, 2004; Carley, 2006; Audit Scotland, 2013). A particularly challenging aspect of the role of CPOs is their leadership at the frontline of this culture change effort (Escobar, 2017a, pp. 147-153). CPOs are thus not only public stewards of partnership work and community engagement, but also culture change agents operating at the cutting edge of reforms in governance and public service. As Figure 5 shows, our survey respondents showed a strong consensus on the importance of fostering culture change in order to accomplish CP goals.

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<sup>11</sup> Questions: 'How much time and energy do you put into each of these aspects of your work?' 'And how much time and energy do you think you should put into each of these aspects of your work?'

**Figure 5. The best way to achieve CP goals is to promote 'culture change' amongst CP partners (n = 105)**



Analysis of the early years of CP pointed out that the development of CPPs as sites for partnership and participation sought reform by “adding to but not wholly displacing pre-existing governing arrangements – thus creating further complexity” (Cowell, 2004, p. 497). This echoes reflections on the English experience of fostering partnerships in local governance:

*“local authorities have been encouraged and then required, to change their arrangements for political leadership and decision-making. But they have for the most part insisted on driving the new vehicle down the old path—whatever the discomfort involved!”*

(Lowndes, 2005, p. 297)

From the early years of CP in Scotland, Abram & Cowell (2004, p. 213) noted “fundamental disputes” about the purpose of CP and “the beliefs and power relations that could hold it together”. The strength of influence by the largest partners (i.e. council and NHS), the ambiguous possibilities for the third and community sectors, and the new roles for elected representatives, officials and citizens, can make these governance spaces where “different operational cultures are held in suspension” (Abram & Cowell, 2004, p. 216; also Escobar, 2015a). Although such spaces can foster change in roles and relationships, they also present challenges:

*“existing arrangements of local governance ... are deeply embedded through informal norms and conventions. When reformers attempt to introduce new institutional frameworks . . . they are faced with the equally important, but rarely recognised, task of de-institutionalising old ways of working ... Those who benefit from existing arrangements are likely to defend the status quo; when formal change becomes inevitable, they may seek to incorporate old ways of working into new partnership structures.”*

(Sullivan & Lowndes, 2004, p. 67)

More recently, Part 2 of the Community Empowerment Act has put forward measures to consolidate and advance the culture change work of the previous two decades. This takes into account Audit Scotland’s (2013) strong emphasis on further culture change as a foundation to turn the ambitions set out by the Christie Commission into reality.

In this context, CPOs work to balance competing constituencies by fostering collaboration and forging new relationships between the multiplicity of actors and interests at play in local governance (Freeman & Peck, 2007, p. 925). An in-depth study of the everyday practices of CPOs in Scotland analysed approaches to CP work, and argued that there is a spectrum ranging from more 'administrative' to more 'activist' approaches:

*"The administrative CPO adopts a fairly bureaucratic role, working within parameters set by others. The activist CPO develops ongoing political work to reshape policy worlds ... The administrative CPO accepts existing cultures, whereas the activist becomes a culture change agent. The former adapts to existing rules-in-use, whereas the latter seeks to create new ones."*

(Escobar, 2017a, p. 154; 2014c)

This is not intended as a binary distinction between specific practitioners, but rather as a spectrum to make sense of different approaches to CP work regarding culture change. Indeed, the study above argues that CPOs may find themselves at different points of the spectrum depending on the context they are trying to navigate, as well as different stages of their career.

On the basis of this qualitative research, we built a couple of questions into the survey to check the extent to which these findings resonated beyond that case study. Our assumption was that CPOs veering on the activist side would tend to agree that sometimes you need to bend the rules in order to make things happen (see Figure 6), and disagree with the notion that the job is mainly administrative (see Figure 7).

**Figure 6. It is important to sometimes bend the rules to make things happen in this job (n = 106)**

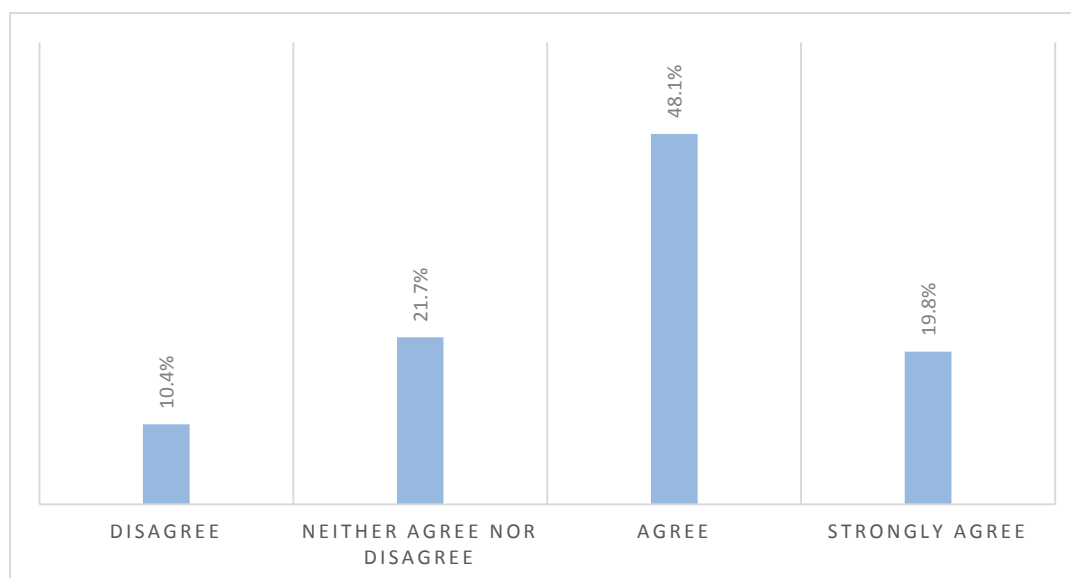
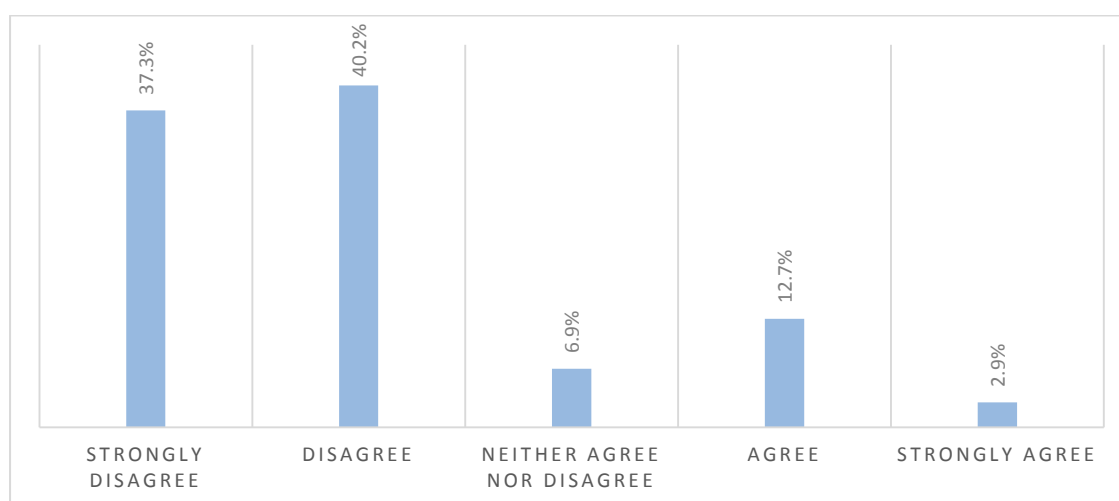


Figure 7. CP work is mainly administrative (n = 102)



Figures 6 and 7 suggest a strong presence of activist approaches in this cadre of CPOs, especially considering that ‘bend the rules’ is, arguably, a strong expression for a public servant. We didn’t find any significant difference in responses between those working as managers or officers or at local/strategic levels.

As argued in Escobar (2014c, pp. 68-72, 236-238), the activism of CPOs doesn’t focus necessarily on specific issues but rather on the form that policy processes take to deal with those issues – i.e. collaborative, participative and/or deliberative. Thinking about CPOs as potential internal activists, doing culture change work from within local government, challenges the “stereotypical distinctions between activist outsides and incorporated insides” (Newman, 2012, ebook location: 4551 ). It is “too simplistic to associate subversion solely with action outside the official sphere” (Barnes & Prior, 2009, p. 10). This has implications for the type of skills needed to drive this kind of culture change work. As Goss (2001, p. 5) puts it:

*“working in the space between bureaucratic, market and network cultures, creates space for innovation ... The constant collision of different assumptions and traditions offers scope to challenge on all sides. The very messiness begins to break down old systems and procedures ... New skills and capabilities are needed.”*

## Skills and training

The survey explored a range of skills in four categories:

1. Engagement skills (mediation, negotiation, process design, facilitation, consultation)
2. Communication skills (persuasion, presentation, writing)
3. Research skills (research, finding and sharing evidence)
4. Management skills (managing team work, resource management)

**Table 5. What is the level of your skill in... (n = 104-106)**

	<b>High or Very High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low, Very Low or None</b>	<b>Doesn't apply</b>
Writing for different audiences	81%	17%	1%	1%
Consultation and engagement	77%	19%	4%	
Facilitation	74%	23%	4%	
Negotiation	69%	27%	3%	1%
Managing team work	69%	22%	4%	5%
Persuasion	64%	33%	3%	
Presentation/public speaking	61%	34%	6%	
Finding and sharing evidence	54%	41%	6%	
Mediation	53%	37%	8%	3%
Resource management	51%	39%	7%	4%
Research	47%	38%	16%	
Process design <sup>12</sup>	33%	52%	14%	2%

Considering that this is a very broad range of skills, including aspects that may be of varied relevance to CPOs depending on the context of their work, this self-assessment does suggest that this is a highly skilled workforce regarding key aspects of the role explored earlier. In particular, respondents highlighted their competency in engagement and communication. As shown in Figure 6, we also asked about the importance attributed by respondents to these skills.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Process design' is perhaps the least self-evident concept in the list and, although our pre-test phase did not indicate any issues with this terminology, we cannot ascertain whether its meaning was clearly understood. What we had in mind is the skill that it takes to design a collaborative and/or participative process, usually entailing a range of stages, components and formats (e.g. Escobar, 2015b). Therefore, we cannot read too much into the fact that it came bottom of the list.



**Table 6. How important are these skills for your work? (n = 105-106)**

	<b>Important or Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Very Important or Not Important At All</b>	<b>Doesn't apply</b>
Consultation and engagement	96%	3%	1%	
Negotiation	88%	10%	3%	
Persuasion	88%	9%	2%	
Facilitation	88%	10%	3%	
Writing for different audiences	88%	9%	3%	1%
Presentation/public speaking	81%	17%	2%	
Finding and sharing evidence	80%	18%	1%	1%
Research	74%	20%	6%	1%
Resource management	73%	13%	11%	3%
Mediation	72%	20%	7%	2%
Managing team work	68%	22%	5%	5%
Process design	63%	31%	6%	1%

All these skills are highly rated by respondents, with engagement and communication skills topping the ranking. This suggests that those are important skills across the board in CP work, with the exception of mediation, which is indicated as highly relevant but not across the board. The relevance of research and management skills is more dependent on specific roles.

**Table 7. When you started your CP role, what training were you given? Please choose all that apply**

All in all, I had no real training	49%
Learned the job from documents	27%
Trained by someone with the same position as me	17%
Trained by someone with a different position	16%
Participated in group training	12%

When asked about training received for their CP role (Table 7), half of the respondents said that they 'had no real training', while a quarter noted that they learned from documents. It seems that there is a limited amount of formalised training in place. However, this may also reflect that their CP role is seen as a continuation of previous roles – for example, generalist public servants can be moved across positions without too much additional training once they have been in post for a while.

As reflected in the literature about new types of policy work, CP entails multi-faceted roles where people learn by doing, through reflective practice and ongoing development as part of a community of practitioners (Forester, 1999; Williams, 2012; Wenger, 1998). This highlights the importance of being part of a team with diverse experience and expertise which can be a challenge in the case of small CP teams – and indeed we found places with only one or two full time CPOs. There is also a key role for peer-learning opportunities between CPPs and as part of a broader network of CPOs across the country.

Finally, we asked CPOs the open question ‘What skills would you like to develop further, and what additional training could be beneficial for you?’<sup>13</sup> Overall, respondents said they would be happy to have more training. Most answered this question with specific suggestions and only four indicated that they don’t need any further training. Two topics came up as the most desirable training: (1) leadership and management with emphasis on managing change or processes; and (2) mediation and facilitation skills. These were followed by (3) research methods and (4) community engagement skills. Other skills mentioned were: (5) monitoring and evaluation skills; (6) politics and policy training; (7) resource and funding management; (8) media and digital training (emphasising social media); (9) public speaking; and (10) use of evidence.

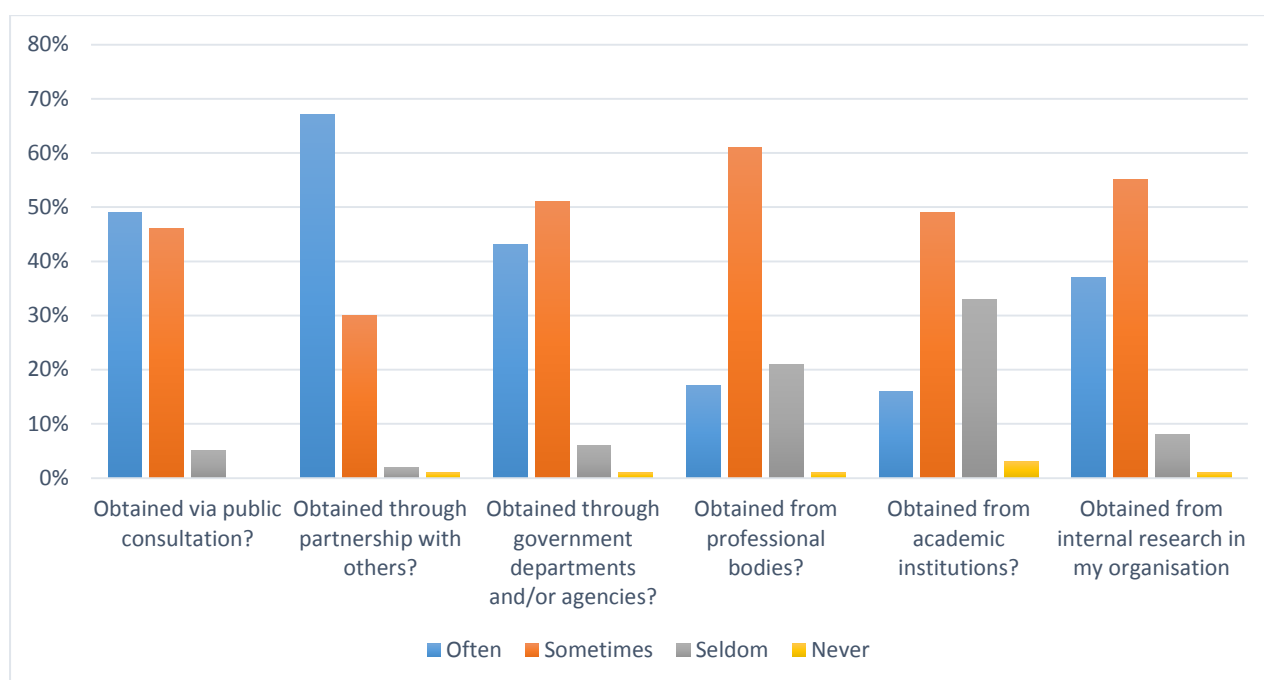
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<sup>13</sup> This open question came just after questions about the skills on Tables 5 and 6, which may have influenced the answers here.

## Using evidence

Improving the use of evidence to inform policy and practice is one of the central issues in current public service reform in Scotland (Coutts & Brothie, 2017). The survey included questions to explore the use of evidence in the context of CPPs and CP work. As seen in the previous section, research and evidence mobilisation skills were not as widespread and highly rated as other skills. However, the findings below do suggest that developing and/or mobilising evidence plays a prominent role in CP work.

**Figure 8. Where do you usually find evidence to use in CPP work? (n = 106)**



CPOs report relying often on evidence obtained through partnership with others, public consultation, government departments and agencies, and to a lesser extent from internal research in their organisation. They also report relying, albeit less often or seldom, on evidence from professional bodies and academic institutions.

It is striking how much evidence respondents say comes from partners. We may read into this that CPPs can be quite self-referential, with partners relying considerably on each other's evidence. However, this can also be interpreted as indicating good CPP collaboration when it comes to sharing evidence – assuming that evidence is been adequately discussed and leads to a robust shared understanding through deliberation. This is an area that merits further research, and we return to related issues later when discussing deliberative quality in CPPs.

What is rather clear is that evidence from academic institutions ranks lowest in the hierarchy of evidence used by CPOs. This resonates with previous research into how evidence is used by policymakers and practitioners in the UK, which argues that universities are the most trusted sources

of evidence but not the most used, partly due to difficulties of publication access (McCormick, 2013, pp. 12-16, 23). Initiatives such as [What Works Scotland](http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/)<sup>14</sup>, the broader [What Works network](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/collaboration-opportunities/what-works-centres/)<sup>15</sup>, the [Alliance for Useful Evidence](http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/)<sup>16</sup>, and, indeed, new [open access policies](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/policy/)<sup>17</sup> by research funding bodies, are seeking to address this issue.

**Table 8. CPP has made full use of different partners' data sources and expertise in data analysis (n = 106)**

Strongly Disagree	6%
Disagree	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%
Agree	31%
Strongly Agree	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8 shows that, despite CPOs reporting that evidence is most often obtained through partnership with others (Figure 8), only 33% of respondents indicated that their CPP makes full use of partners' data sources and expertise in data analysis. There is therefore considerable room for improvement in making the most of existing capacity within CPPs. This raises important questions about the level of confidence in sharing of evidence amongst CP partners, and merits further research into barriers and enablers.

The survey also sought to gauge the extent of the use of evidence to assess the distribution of positive and negative outcomes and to understand which CPP activities represent good value for money. Table 9 reflects a strong focus on using evidence to assess outcomes, particularly regarding inequalities, with most respondents (70%) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Table 10 shows that there is also considerable focus, although less stark (55%), on using evidence to assess value for money and achieve SOA outcomes.

**Table 9. CPP uses evidence and research to understand the distribution of positive and negative outcomes across its area, including information relating to inequalities (n = 106)**

Strongly Disagree	4%
Disagree	11%
Neither agree nor disagree	15%
Agree	59%
Strongly Agree	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>14</sup> <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/collaboration-opportunities/what-works-centres/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/policy/>

**Table 10. CPP draws upon evidence and research to inform its understanding of which activities represent good value for money and make a tangible difference to achieving SOA outcomes (n = 105)**

Strongly Disagree	3%
Disagree	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%
Agree	49%
Strongly Agree	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Only 50% of respondents reported that their CPP team has expertise in evaluation (see Table 11) which seems unsurprising given the small size of many teams and the need to rely on expertise from other council divisions. The large percentage of respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed (30%) suggests that perhaps their teams haven't had to evaluate projects and thus haven't had to demonstrate that capacity. As CP activity gains further prominence in the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act, the role of CPOs in evaluating that activity may increase. Fully 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that CP could be improved by better use of evidence and evaluation (Table 12).

**Table 11. The CPP team I am part of has expertise on evaluation (n = 106)**

Strongly Disagree	5%
Disagree	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	30%
Agree	39%
Strongly Agree	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 12. Better evaluation and evidence would help to improve how CP works (n = 106)**

Strongly Disagree	3%
Disagree	2%
Neither agree nor disagree	8%
Agree	52%
Strongly Agree	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to responses summarised in Table 13, lack of capacity and/or resource to undertake or commission research, are the main challenges regarding the use of evidence. Other challenges include lack of buy-in by elected members and officers, which resonates with previous research that highlights the importance of leadership in improving evidence use (Breckon & Dobson, 2016, pp. 20-21).

**Table 13. Which of the following challenges does the CPP face in the use of evidence and research in general? Please tick all that apply (n = 107)**

We do not have enough capacity / resource to undertake our own research	61%
We do not have enough capacity / resource to commission research from others	44%
Elected members do not prioritise using evidence and research to inform policy and decision-making	36%
Officers do not prioritise using evidence and research to inform policy and decision-making	24%
Partners do not prioritise using evidence and research to inform policy and decision-making	17%
We cannot identify partners who would be willing to work together to build an evidence and research base	9%

We checked whether there were differences with respect to the above statements depending on whether the respondent was a manager or an officer, and working at strategic or at local level (see Table E in Appendix). The lack of statistically significant differences suggests that these challenges are shared across CPP roles and levels. The only significant difference was that CPOs working at local level indicated more difficulty in identifying partners to work together to build an evidence base<sup>18</sup>.

**Table 14. Which of the following challenges does the CPP face in the use of statistical data? Please tick all that apply (n = 107)**

We do not have the capacity/resource to undertake our own data analysis	43%
We can rarely find data that is at the appropriate spatial scale	43%
We can rarely find evidence and research that we think is applicable in our circumstances	22%
We can rarely find data that is applicable to the questions we are seeking to answer	19%

When it comes to using statistical data, the two main challenges highlighted by respondents are lack of capacity and/or resource to undertake statistical data analysis and dearth of data at the appropriate spatial scale (Table 14). The lack of analytical capacity is particularly relevant because it increases the risk of asking the wrong questions, accepting top-down proposals on trust and having insufficient scrutiny of external analyses.

We checked whether there were differences with respect to the above statements between managers and officers, and working at strategic or local level (see Table F in Appendix). Officers were significantly more likely to indicate that they ‘can rarely find data that is applicable to the questions we are seeking to answer’: 29% of officers and 10% of managers indicated this as a challenge. While 51% of respondents working at strategic level indicated that they ‘can rarely find data that is at the appropriate spatial scale’, only 27% of CPOs at local level shared this challenge.

All in all, the findings in this section highlight potential for capacity-building and skills development, in particular analytical training to make effective use of evidence presented by partners, consultants and in-house teams as well as from other sources.

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<sup>18</sup> This challenge has also been identified in the Collaborative Action Research strand of What Works Scotland. See: <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-project/our-approach-to-collaborative-action-research/>

## Understanding how CPPs work

What Works Scotland has previously reviewed evidence into key factors for effective partnership in UK public services (Cook, 2015). Our focus in this survey is on issues that underpin partnership arrangements and interactions. In particular, inclusion, interdependence and quality of deliberation are highlighted in the literature as three core dimensions in successful collaborative governance (Innes & Booher, 2010, 2003). In the context of CPPs, inclusion refers to the diversity of perspectives brought into CP activities; interdependence refers to the extent to which CP partners feel that they need each other in order to get things done, thus being incentivised by the prospects of ‘collaborative advantage’ (Doberstein, 2016); and quality of deliberation refers to the quality of communication during meetings; more on this later.

The aim of this section is to explore key dynamics and dimensions that have an impact on how well CPPs function as platforms for partnership work, including:

- focus of CPP meetings at various levels
- inclusion and deliberation at the CPP Board
- interaction and leadership across the CPP
- the added value of CP collaboration

### Main activities in CPP meetings

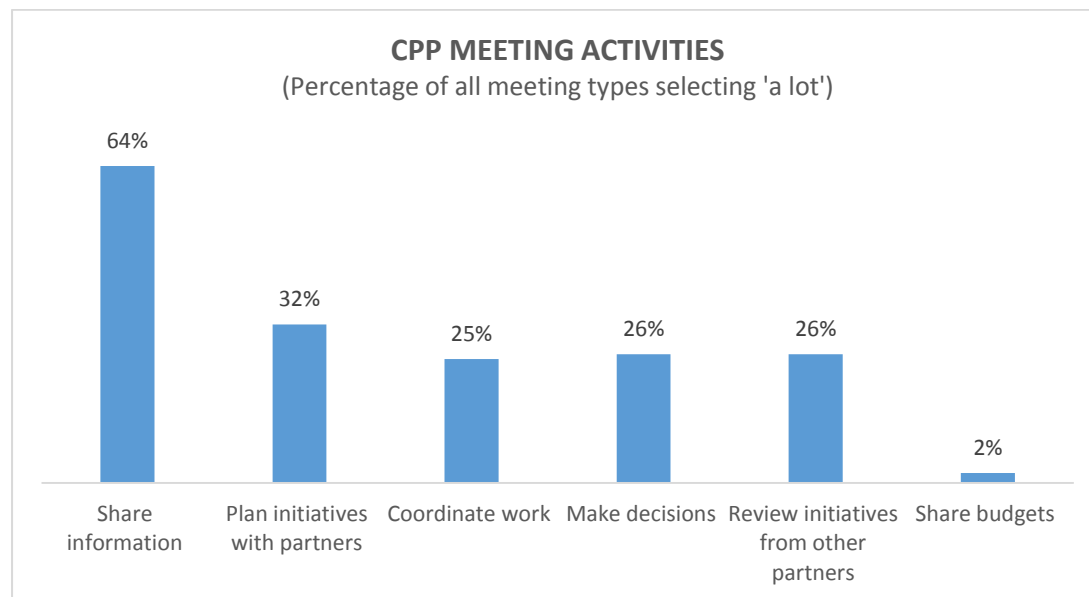
We asked survey participants about the extent and range of collaborative activities (i.e. sharing information; planning initiatives with partners; coordinating work; making decisions; reviewing initiatives from other partners; sharing budgets) that take place in different meetings across the CPP (i.e. Board; Theme Groups; Local Forums; Area Partnerships; Resource Planning Group). The results are shown in detail in Table G (Appendix) but here we focus on the activities that appear predominant across all meetings.

According to our respondents, CPP meetings at all levels are spaces for sharing information and, to some extent, coordinate and plan together. To a lesser extent, they are also seen as spaces for collaborative decision-making (particularly in local forums and area partnerships) and to review each other’s initiatives. What seems clear is that they are not reported as spaces where partnership working entails sharing budgets (see Figure 9). This resonates with findings from successive Audit Scotland reports regarding, more broadly, the sharing of assets and resources (Audit Scotland, 2016, 2013, 2014), and in particular recent updates reflecting that, despite progress in joint working:

*“we have yet to see CPP partners sharing, aligning, or redeploying their resources in significantly different ways and on a larger scale to deliver the CPPs’ priorities, in line with the 2013 agreement on joint working on community planning and resourcing”*

(Audit Scotland, 2016, p. 5)

**Figure 9. Types of activities that occur 'a lot' in CPP meetings. See Table G in Appendix for the full dataset**



## Inclusion and deliberation at the CPP board

This section explores inclusion at CPP board level, as well as deliberative quality. We are particularly interested in two types of inclusion, namely external and internal (Young, 2000). External inclusion refers to the extent that diverse relevant actors are present at the CP board, while internal inclusion refers to whether those actors have a meaningful opportunity to participate and exercise influence once at the CP board. In other words, external inclusion is about getting a place at the table, while internal inclusion is about the capacity to shape conversations and decisions once there.



Figure 10. Who is on your CPP Board?

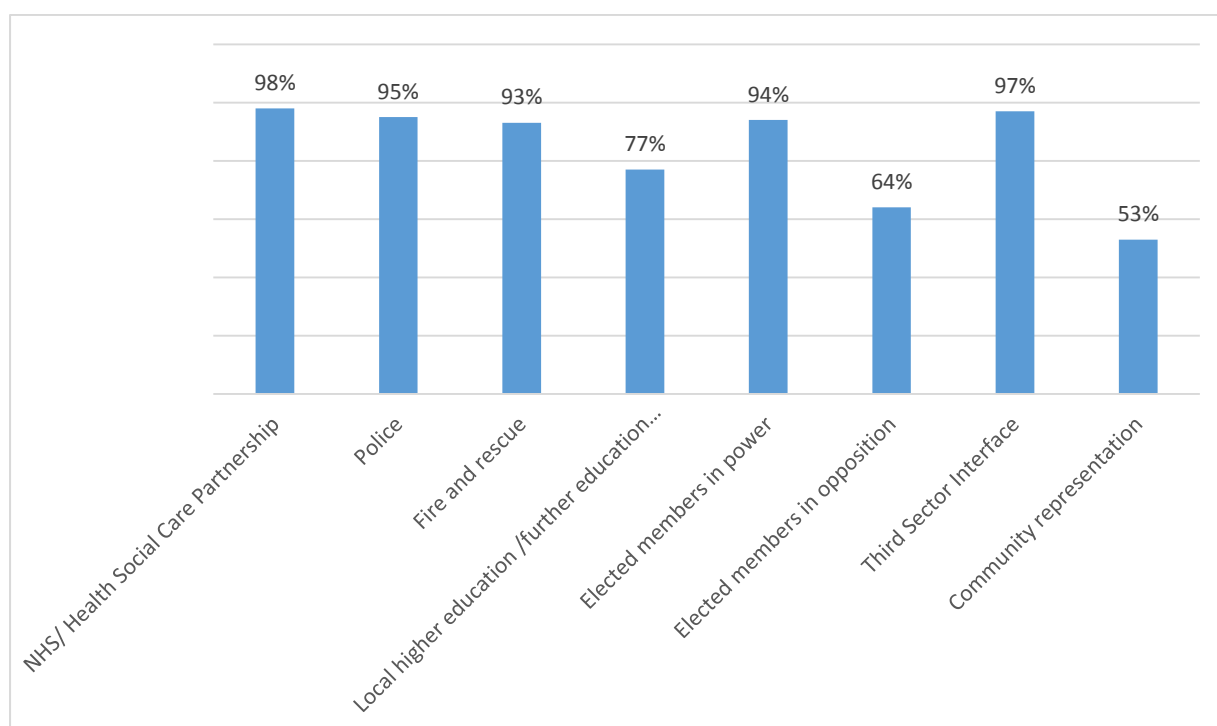


Figure 10 offers a mixed picture in terms of diversity at the board, with strong public and third sector presence and weaker community representation. It is unsurprising that statutory bodies and third sector interfaces (TSIs) have a strong presence given duties and expectations placed on them by CP policies.

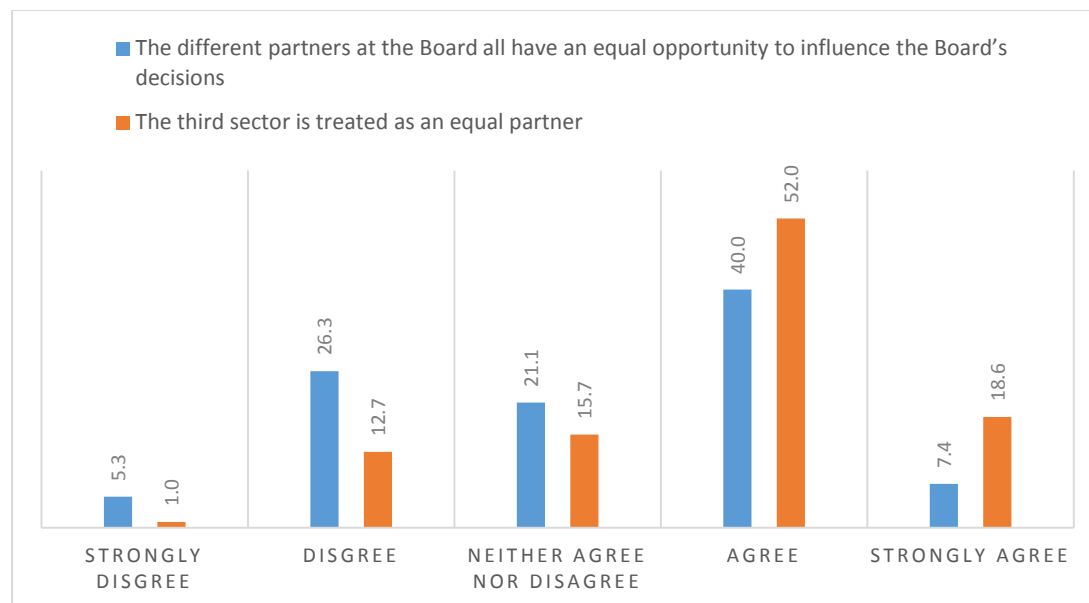
Only half of the survey respondents said that their CP board features community representation, which is also unsurprising. It can be challenging to find a way of representing communities at strategic level often due to a lack of recognisable and/or legitimate intermediaries. In some places, community councillors can play this role but the presence and legitimacy of community councils is patchy and contested across the country<sup>19</sup> (Escobar, 2014a). In addition, community representation may be seen as more appropriate at the local level of the CPP, albeit this is problematic given the policy ambition to ensure that CP at all levels features meaningful community engagement. We return to these issues later.

The responses also reflect a high level of elected member representation including, somewhat surprisingly, opposition politicians. This might reflect the reality of coalition and minority administrations up and down the country. This finding goes some way to counter potential critiques of a democratic deficit and disconnection between collaborative governance in CPPs and the representative institutions of local government. However, more research is needed to understand the impact of the role of elected members in CPPs.

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<sup>19</sup> What Works Scotland and the Scottish Community Development Centre conducted a research review of community councils in late 2017 and early 2018: <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/www-and-scdc-collaborating-on-review-of-community-councils-in-scotland/>

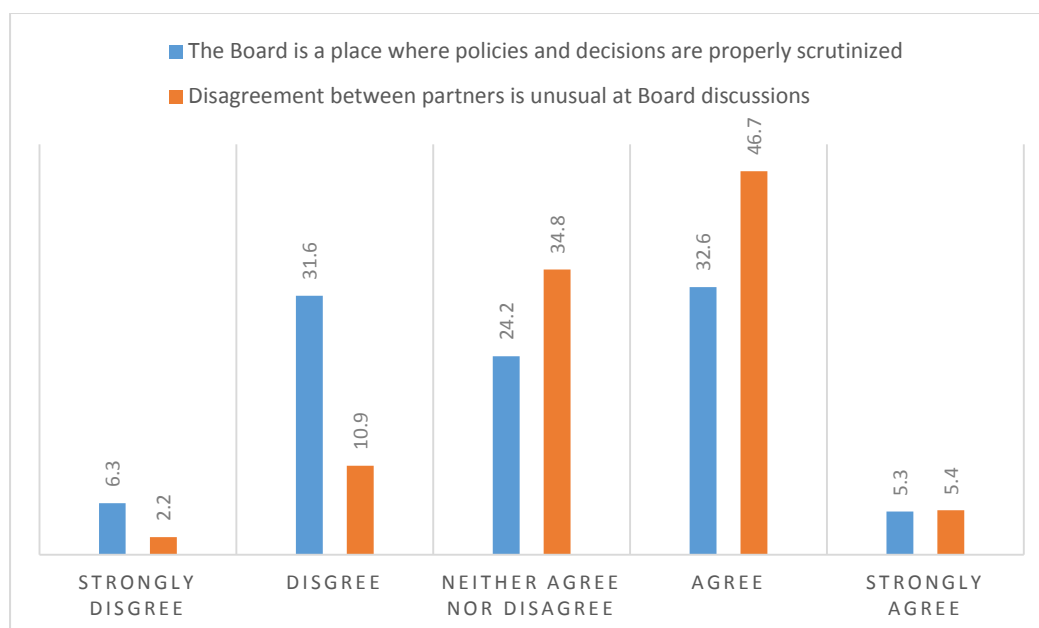
**Figure 11. For each of the following statements, please state how much you agree or disagree with the statement, and feel free to skip any statement that is not relevant to you (N ranges from 95 to 102)**



In terms of internal inclusion Figure 11 shows a mixed response regarding equal opportunity amongst different partners to influence the board's decisions (the first columns (blue) in the graph), with just under half of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. The notion of 'equal opportunity to influence' must be placed in the context of the range of actors represented at the board where disparities may stem from different statutory responsibilities and expertise depending on the issues being discussed.

The second statement (orange) adds some nuance by showing that more respondents agree on the equal partner role of the third sector (70%) compared to the spread of responses on the first statement about all partners. This is an important finding, with the positive perspective of these CPOs being somewhat in contrast to the views of TSI representatives who in previous studies have been critical of their unequal role in some CPPs (Escobar, 2014b, 2015a). This may reflect progress being made, or indeed that CPOs may not always be aware of some of these views amongst TSI representatives.

**Figure 12. For each of the following statements, please state how much you agree or disagree with the statement, and feel free to skip any statement that is not relevant to you (N ranges from 95 to 102)**



The findings in Figure 12 pertain to two important aspects in assessing deliberative quality at the board. Deliberative quality depends, amongst other things, on the level of reciprocal scrutiny between partners, and this entails engaging meaningfully with disagreements about competing priorities and perspectives (Roberts & Escobar, 2015, pp. 89-91). High deliberative standards seek to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of the best evidence and reasons available, as determined through robust deliberation amongst partners (Escobar, 2017b, pp. 425-430).

The responses to both statements in Figure 12 suggest that the level of scrutiny at the CP board is rather limited, with only 38% agreeing that it is a place where policies and decisions are properly scrutinised. This low level of scrutiny is further illustrated by responses to the second statement (in orange) where only 13% of respondents indicate some level of disagreement at their board. This resonates strongly with the qualitative findings of a previous in-depth case study of an anonymous CPP (Escobar, 2014c), summarised in Box 1 to illustrate the importance of deliberative quality. Some of these issues have been also reflected in studies carried out by Audit Scotland (2013, p. 10):

*“Community planning continues to become more of a shared enterprise, with more active participation by partners and evidence of more shared ownership of the priorities in SOAs. Although aspects of community planning are improving, leadership, scrutiny and challenge are still inconsistent. There is little evidence that CPP boards are yet demonstrating the levels of leadership and challenge set out in the [2012] Statement of Ambition.”*

**Box 1. ‘Collaboration needs disagreement’ – Anonymous case study that illustrates lack of deliberative quality at a CPP Board (based on Escobar, 2014c)**

The CP board was primarily a space where partners shared information and coordinated activities. It was not a space for open dialogue on difficult issues, pressing problems and potential solutions, nor a place where they could engage in robust deliberation about policies and services. Accordingly, the partners at the board rarely challenged each other, even when they ostensibly disagreed, giving place to apparent consensus and consent.

The problem with this dynamic is that a lack of deliberative scrutiny and challenge can be detrimental to successful policymaking and service delivery. Particularly when partners agreed on certain initiatives for strategic reasons rather than because they seemed the most effective. For example, interviews with third sector leaders revealed that they often avoided challenging other partners for fear of jeopardising their own agendas (e.g. public sector grants to third sector organisations). This further reduced the input of community perspectives, given that third sector leaders were the only board members directly linked to activity at the grassroots.

The difficulty in facilitating meaningful dialogue and robust deliberation was accentuated by the fact that some senior council officials were reticent to engage with CP as a space for collaboration and co-production. Interviews with these officials showed that they were often unhappy about opening up their work to scrutiny by other partners. This also meant that relevant forms of knowledge and evidence from other CP partners were sometimes disregarded.

This case study suggests that CP forums may perhaps be better evaluated not in function of collaboration through apparent consensus, but by how much critical deliberation they elicit. In this light, a strategic forum (e.g. theme group or board) is as good as the level of diversity and disagreement it manages to reflect and work through. From this perspective, partnership work means co-production of policies and services through deliberation about competing priorities and perspectives. In sum, meaningful collaboration can be undermined by a lack of space for scrutiny and disagreement.

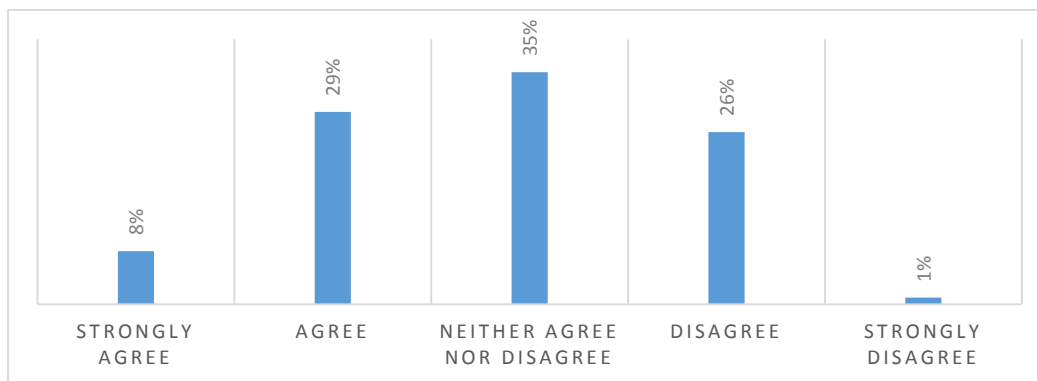
## **Interaction and leadership across the CPP**

Earlier we noted that effective collaboration requires participants to feel interdependent, as a basis for effective relationships in partnership work. While the survey does not assess the extent to which different CPP partners feel interdependent, we do have some data about relationships. The survey asked CPOs whether they think unproductive relationships between partners hinder the work of the CPP (Figure 13). While 37% of respondents agree with the statement only 27% disagree, suggesting that unproductive relationships between partners may currently prevent stronger impact by CPPs. We found no significant difference in responses by those working at local or strategic level or between managers and officers.<sup>20</sup>

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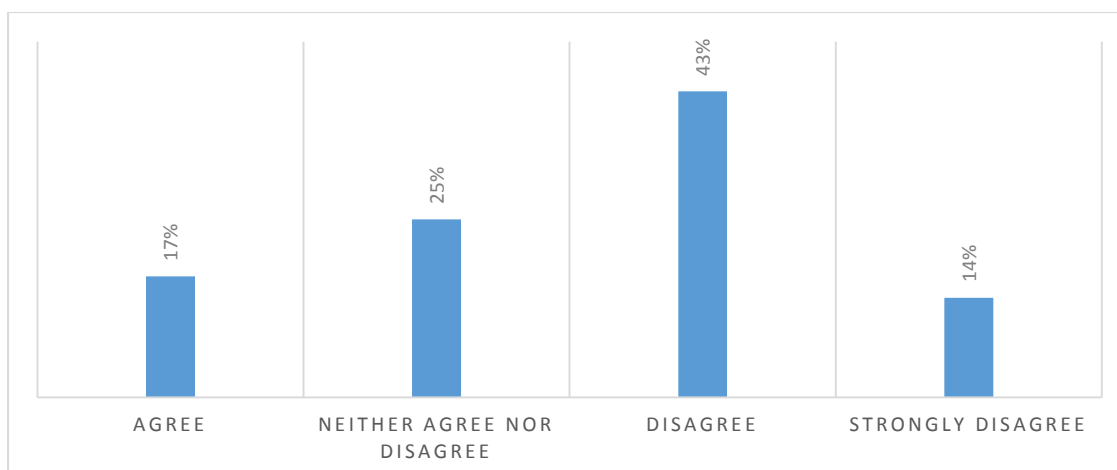
<sup>20</sup> Figures 12 and 13 show a high number of neutral responses (‘Neither agree nor disagree’). The most likely explanation is that respondents felt that these issues exist but not to the extent described in the question. For example, unproductive relationships get in the way – but not often. Or the SOA was seen as an important framework – but not key to guiding the work of all the partners.

**Figure 13. Unproductive relationships between partners often get in the way of achieving more (n = 96)**



We also checked the extent to which CPOs perceived that the (now obsolete) SOA provided a shared frame of reference for all the CP partners (see Figure 14). The responses to this question were stark, with only 17% of respondents agreeing that all partners took the SOA as the key framework to guide their work. It remains to be seen whether the new local outcome improvement plans (LOIPs) will fare better in terms of buy-in, an issue to be explored in the second wave of this survey. LOIPs are intended to provide shared focus and purpose to tackle priorities through collaborative action at local and strategic levels. Buy-in by CP partners will remain a key indicator of the extent to which CPPs are fulfilling their remit as spaces for joint working and governance.

**Figure 14. The SOA (Single Outcome Agreement) is the key framework that guides the work of all the partners (n = 99)**



The survey asked CPOs about their level of agreement with the statement 'the senior leadership team within the CPP articulates a clear vision for Community Planning' (see Table 15). Only 29% of respondents agreed with the statement which suggests that many CPOs perceive a lack of clear vision for CP at senior level. We found no significant difference in responses by those working a local or strategic level, nor between managers and officers.

**Table 15. The senior leadership team within the CPP articulates a clear vision for Community Planning (n = 99)**

Strongly Agree	9%
Agree	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%
Disagree	44%
Strongly Disagree	13%

As shown in Table 16, when asked whether ‘leadership arrangements across the CPP enhance Community Planning processes’, only 30% of respondents agreed with the statement which suggests that there is considerable room for improvement across CPPs. We found no significant difference in responses by those working at local or strategic level, or between managers and officers.

**Table 16. The leadership arrangements across the CPP enhance Community Planning processes (n = 99)**

Strongly Agree	7%
Agree	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	29%
Disagree	32%
Strongly Disagree	8%

What Works Scotland is developing a strand of work on leadership (see Chapman et al., 2017; Bland, 2017)<sup>21</sup> and this merits particular attention in the context of CP work to gain qualitative insights into what types of leadership are conducive to improve outcomes in CPPs.

## The added value of CP collaboration

The survey asked for examples of initiatives that wouldn’t happen without the CPP and thus illustrate the ‘added value’ (Audit Scotland, 2014, p. 18) of CP activity. Responding to the question ‘could you please give us one or two examples of policies, projects, or services that wouldn’t happen without your CPP. In other words, what is the added value of CPPs?’ most respondents listed specific projects addressing a range of issues including safety, care for children and the elderly, and support for refugees. These included different programmes, forums, and initiatives and noted some tangible benefits to communities, as exemplified in this quote:

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<sup>21</sup> See also our recent blogpost on facilitative leadership:  
<http://whatworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk/2017/05/facilitative-leadership-involving-citizens-and-communities-in-local-decision-making.html>

*“At a senior level the work on projects such as [place-based initiative], which is a multi-agency approach to looking at vulnerable families ... by working together and finding different ways of doing things that can bring early interventions and achieve positive outcomes; but there are many others. At a local level Area Partnerships have their own budgets and local plans with priorities and timescales which tie into the Council Plan and Single Outcome Agreement. This allows local partnerships to help and support groups to make a difference such as [third sector organisations and programmes] and also to provide other services such as skate parks, rural broadband, sustainable transport improvements, educational attendance and attainment and achieving tangible improvements seen as important by communities.”*

A particularly large number of projects were mentioned in policy areas such as drugs and alcohol, employment, and tackling poverty, and some highlighted the role of projects in responding to the effects of budget cuts:

*“Welfare reform mitigation actions, all jointly planned and implemented through [programme name] and recognised as best practice by the Scottish Government.”*

Another type of added value mentioned repeatedly was the development of participatory budgeting initiatives, and sharing resources more broadly, e.g.

*“The CPP provides a forum for partners to plan and share resources together. This would be more challenging if the CPP didn't exist.”*

Some respondents see the added value not necessarily in the CP projects themselves but in the process that leads to them. Specifically, respondents mentioned the contribution of CPPs to community engagement, e.g.

*“Neighbourhood planning and its value to local communities is the key thing that comes to mind. Working with communities to identify issues, work towards co-ordinated solutions in partnership with them and deliver services/outcomes in keeping with the SOA.”*

and to collaboration between different CPP partners:

*“We have a successful [multi-agency programme] which consists of many CPP partner agencies and exists mainly via the CPP framework.”*

The SOA was mentioned several times as a useful tool for CPPs in this context. Finally, while the vast majority of respondents had at least one positive comment about the CPPs' added value, some respondents did not answer the question and three answered it negatively, for instance giving examples of partnership work that would happen regardless of the existence of CPPs. These were, however, a small minority in our survey although it is likely that those who answered the survey are more engaged in the first place, and that those who feel less involved in making a contribution to partnership work may be less inclined to answer. Nevertheless, respondents provided a variety of examples that demonstrate added value by CPPs in achieving positive outcomes across a wide range of policy areas.

We also wanted to explore the added value question according to two other dimensions, namely: the extent to which CP partners may 'feel that they could have achieved the same outcomes or

better on their own', and the extent to which CPP meetings add value by enabling shared decision-making by partners (Table 17).

**Table 17. The 'added value' question. Responses to statements categorised according to the CPP spaces in which respondents are most involved**

	All	Board	Theme groups	Local forums	Area partnerships	Resource planning group
<b>Some of the CPP partners feel that they could have achieved the same outcomes or better on their own</b>						
Strongly Disagree	5%	6%	5%	8%	6%	8%
Disagree	28%	33%	30%	29%	26%	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	34%	29%	32%	29%	39%	33%
Agree	31%	29%	33%	34%	26%	25%
Strongly Agree	1%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%
<b>Decisions are usually being made elsewhere and not in the CPP meetings</b>						
Strongly Disagree	1%	0.0%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Disagree	24%	21%	25%	37%	34%	24%
Neither agree nor disagree	25%	26%	28%	34%	25%	28%
Agree	44%	43%	41%	24%	30%	44%
Strongly Agree	6%	9%	7%	5%	8%	4%

It is somewhat striking that only a third of respondents disagree with the first statement, which suggests that CPOs are sceptical about the extent to which some CP partners see the value of partnership work.

Responses to the second statement reveal mixed views about where decisions are made; half of the respondents agree that decisions are usually being made elsewhere and not in CPP meetings, and only 25% disagreed with this. There are some apparent differences between strategic level (board, theme groups, resource planning group) and local level (local forums, area partnerships) although we didn't test for statistical significance. This may be indicative of successes in devolving power to local spaces in some CPPs.

All in all, the findings in this section give some credence to the argument that CPPs are sometimes seen as 'secondary arenas' for policy and decision-making (Escobar, 2015a), with core business carried out elsewhere (e.g. through bilateral engagement between statutory organisations). From this perspective, CPPs seem to function more as spaces for sharing information and planning and coordinating initiatives, than as key sites for co-production and decision-making.

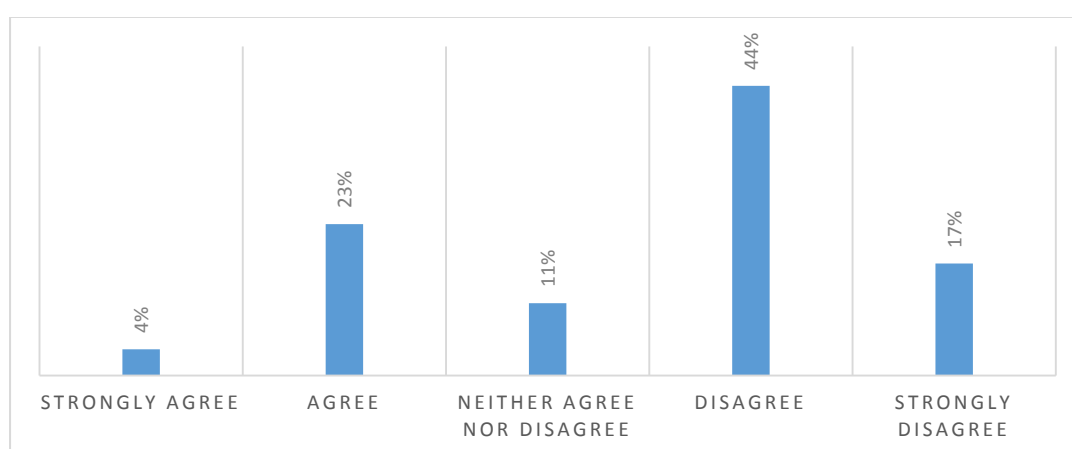


## Community engagement in community planning

Community engagement has remained a recurrent challenge throughout the history of CPPs and is arguably one of the most underdeveloped aspects of CP work (Audit Scotland, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2016; Cowell, 2004; Sinclair, 2008; Scott, 2012; Matthews, 2012). This section explores the role of community engagement in CPPs, the types of engagement processes deployed, their impact on decision making and the challenges of organising community engagement.

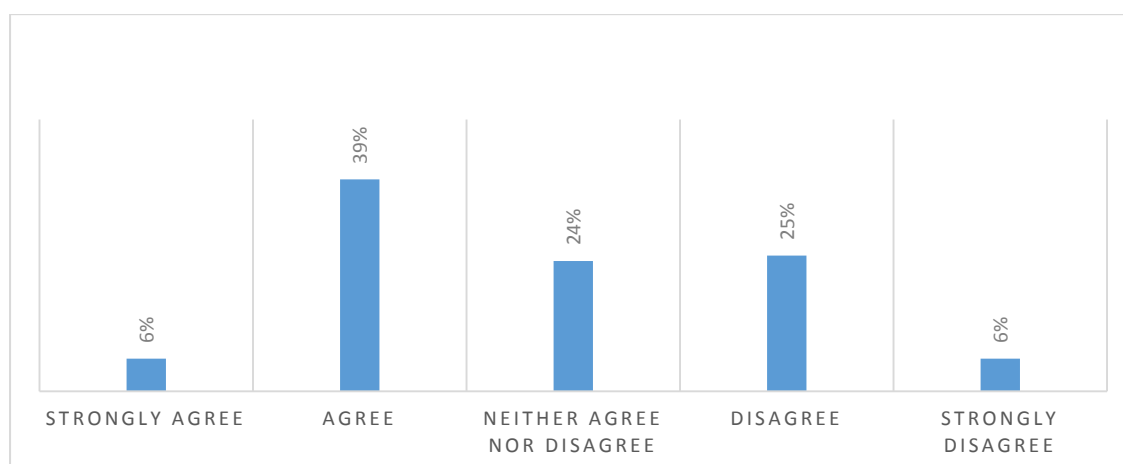
An important, albeit not new, finding from our survey is that community engagement is not yet seen as a key part of how CPPs work. As Figure 15 shows, only 27% of respondents agree that community engagement is central to the work of their CPP, which is consistent with findings and critiques in previous studies cited above.

**Figure 15. Community engagement is a key part of how CPPs work (n = 99)**



The survey sought to explore the extent to which CPPs constitute coherent systems that connect priorities decided at local level to the strategic work of the CPP. As shown in Figure 16, only 45% of respondents agree that priorities from local partnerships and public forums feed clearly into the work of the board, which supports ongoing critiques of the disjuncture between local and strategic decision-making in CPPs (e.g. Audit Scotland, 2016, p. 20).

**Figure 16. Priorities from Local Partnerships and public forums feed clearly into the work of the CPP board (n = 97)**



These findings do not necessarily reflect a lack of community engagement in CP, but rather that it is not yet central to how all CPPs work and how decisions about priorities are made. Our survey found plenty of community engagement activity going on with most CPOs involved in organising a wide range of processes.

## Types of community engagement processes

The most common types of processes organised by CPOs are task groups (80%) and targeted workshops (78%) followed by public meetings (65%), participatory budgeting (55%), and other community forums (44%). Table 18 shows that CPOs in local roles organise more public meetings, participatory budgeting, community forums, and community activities than those in strategic roles. The only types of meetings organised more by those working at strategic level are citizen panels/juries and community galas and festivals.

**Table 18. Which of these do you organise? Tick all that apply (n = 107)**

	All CPOs	Local CPOs	Strategic CPOs
Task groups/working groups	80%	80%	79%
Targeted workshops	79%	80%	78%
Public meetings	65%	83%	57%
Participatory budgeting	55%	63%	52%
Community forums	45%	60%	38%
Community activities	37%	63%	26%
Citizen panels/juries	27%	20%	30%
Community galas and festivals	16%	13%	18%

Table 18 shows that the toolbox of CPOs active in organising community engagement is wide-ranging and encompasses

- *traditional community engagement processes* such as public meetings, workshops, task groups, forums, galas & festivals, activities;
- as well as *democratic innovations* such as citizens' panels and juries and participatory budgeting (cf. Elstub & Escobar, 2018; Smith, 2009).

This is a positive finding, insofar it suggests CPOs' capacity to facilitate a range of processes and thus potentially reach a broad cross-section of the local population. Table 18 also suggests that traditional community engagement activities are more common in the context of CPPs than processes such as participatory budgeting and citizens' panels and juries. These democratic innovations seem more peripheral to CPPs although this may change as a result of developments such as the Community Choices<sup>22</sup> programme (£4.7 million invested so far) and the landmark agreement<sup>23</sup> between COSLA and the Scottish Government to allocate at least 1% of local government budgets via participatory

<sup>22</sup> See <https://pbscotland.scot/blog/2017/10/24/15-million-for-community-choices?rq=Community%20Choices>

<sup>23</sup> See <https://news.gov.scot/news/more-choice-for-communities>

budgeting by 2021 (estimated at £100 million). The second wave of the survey should reflect some of the effects of these policies.

Here we introduce two other conceptual categories that can help us to analyse these processes. Firstly, there are three *models of participatory democracy* underlying the activities in Table 18, which we classify as follows according to forum composition:

- *Associative democracy*, where those invited to participate are community representatives or intermediaries from established community groups and associations (i.e. targeted workshops, task groups/working groups).
- *Direct democracy*, where those invited to participate are citizens/residents that do not need to be part of existing community groups or associations (i.e. public meetings, citizen panels/juries).
- *Hybrid democracy*, where those invited to participate are a mix of community representatives/intermediaries and citizens/residents (i.e. participatory budgeting, community forums).

Participation by established community representatives and intermediaries is central to CPPs, with targeted workshops, task groups and working groups topping Table 18 and highlighting the prevalence of the *associative* model of participatory democracy. It is important, however, that CPPs do not rely solely on associative models which assume that existing groups and organisations can represent the diverse views of citizens and communities. Therefore, community engagement should include opportunities for direct participation by citizens who do not see themselves represented by existing intermediaries. This seems to be taking place to some extent in CPPs through participatory budgeting, community forums, public meetings and citizens' panels and juries. The Community Empowerment Act is underpinned by a hybrid model of participatory democracy and thus future research should investigate the impact of its implementation in the configuration of activities on the ground.

Secondly, these community engagement activities can also be categorised according to whether they are *deliberative or non-deliberative*:

- *Deliberative community engagement* refers to processes that entail discursive participation, that is, engaging in facilitated conversations to address local and/or policy issues (i.e. public meetings, targeted workshops, citizens' panels/juries, participatory budgeting, task groups, community forums).
- *Non-deliberative community engagement* refers to processes where participation does not necessarily entail formally discussing local and/or policy issues (i.e. galas & festivals, community activities).

As Table 18 shows, the bulk of CPOs' community engagement work entails deliberative processes, which reinforces the observations made earlier about the importance of facilitation skills –a crucial component in building capacity for deliberative engagement (e.g. Escobar, 2011).

## **Impact of community engagement**

As shown earlier (Figure 16), local engagement processes do not always feed clearly into the strategic agenda of CPPs. In this light, it is perhaps surprising that 48% of respondents agreed that

community engagement has an influence on policies and services (see Table 19), although this may be because the question asked about this issue in general, rather than with an explicit focus on CP.

**Table 19. Community Engagement has a significant impact on policy decisions and services (n = 101)**

Strongly Disagree	5%
Disagree	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	27%
Agree	40%
Strongly Agree	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

International research highlights the importance of the role of elected representatives in enabling or hindering the impact of community engagement processes on policy and governance (e.g. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; Lowndes et al., 2006; Hagelskamp et al., 2016; Edelenbos et al., 2017; Torfing & Ansell, 2017).

We asked CPOs whether they work with elected members to organise community engagement (see Table 20). Only 42% responded affirmatively, which suggests some disconnect between participatory processes and representative institutions. The risk of this disconnect is that it can increase public cynicism and the trust gap between citizens and representatives, and communities and institutions. Another risk is that findings generated through community engagement (e.g. drawing on local and experiential knowledge) may not be given meaningful consideration as part of the evidence base to inform deliberation and decision-making.

We also checked the relationship between responses in Table 20 and responses to the statement 'community engagement has a significant impact on policy decisions and services' (Table 19). There is a weak (0.2) but significant (0.048) relationship between the two variables (Spearman correlation) although, as noted throughout the report, the sample does not warrant strong statistical inferences and thus these findings are only tentative. Nevertheless, that correlation lends some support to the notion that involving elected members in community engagement may sometimes boost the impact of the process. This, of course depends on a range of factors (e.g. local context, leadership style), that need to be further explored through qualitative research (e.g. Escobar, 2017a, pp. 150-153).

**Table 20. I work with Elected Members regularly to organise community engagement processes (n = 99)**

Strongly Disagree	8%
Disagree	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%
Agree	36%
Strongly Agree	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 21. ‘The Elected Members in my area use input from community engagement to inform their decisions’ (n = 99)**

Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	40%
Agree	38%
Strongly Agree	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Finally, only 44% of respondents agreed that community engagement helps to inform decision-making by elected representatives (see Table 21). However, we tested whether this may simply be the result of lack of contact between respondents and elected members. Indeed, we found that the more a CPO works with members the more positive opinions the CPO has of the members’ use of input from community engagement activities to inform their decisions (see Table H in the Appendix for detailed results).

## Challenges of community engagement in CP

Having capacity to design and facilitate participatory processes can be a challenge for CPPs so we wanted to check the extent to which community engagement work is outsourced (see Table 22). Over a third of respondents (38%) said that these processes are organised drawing on in-house expertise at the council, with just under a third saying that they outsource mainly to the third sector (31%). This means that a majority (69%) of community engagement processes are delivered by CP partners.

**Table 22. Do you occasionally outsource any community engagement work? (n = 100)**

No, we carry it out using in-house expertise	38%
Yes, mainly to the third sector	31%
Yes, to both the private sector and the third sector	22%
Yes, mainly to the private sector	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Only 9% of respondents said that this work is mainly outsourced to the private sector which is in contrast to developments in other countries where there is a growing ‘industry of participation’ increasingly populated by for-profit companies (e.g. Lee, 2015). There is some debate about the advantages and disadvantages of deploying in-house expertise versus hiring external consultants (Escobar, 2017a, pp. 158-159), and this depends for example on local circumstances, quality of contracting and monitoring, and issues about loss of direct control and engagement. Understanding the trade-offs involved in the context of CPPs requires further research.

However, given that in current policies and legislation community engagement is seen as core CP business, it is important that this can be supported by properly resourced teams of participation practitioners and community organisers within the ranks of the CPP. Improving the level and quality

of engagement across CPPs requires building capacity to carry out this work. This relates to findings in a recent interim evaluation about the development of participatory budgeting in Scotland:

*"PB activities to date represent a significant resource commitment on the part of local authorities, or more specifically on the community development/engagement functions which have been charged with delivering this approach and where no additional staff have been allocated. Existing staff are absorbing considerable additional workloads which represents an unsustainable delivery model."*

(O'Hagan et al., 2017, p. 17)

Our survey also asked: 'What are the main challenges of involving citizens and communities in Community Planning?' The vast majority of respondents offered an answer to this open question, suggesting that this is indeed a question they find relevant. Some responses consider the feasibility of involving communities, with the main issues being lack of resources and capacity in the CP teams:

*"Geographic size of CPP area and associated costs in involving citizens and communities."*

*"Lack of resources. We use existing networks where we can, but without an actual community engagement budget it can be difficult even affording accommodation to have engagement events."*

*"The Scottish Government cutting the Council's budget while increasing the NHS budget."*

Other responses discussed public fatigue regarding the sheer quantity of inconsequential consultations taking place:

*"We are constantly consulting our communities. It is making them disengage, especially if they cannot see any outputs or outcomes as a result."*

Yet other responses focussed on the quality of the engagement process<sup>24</sup>, highlighting their aspiration of more meaningful and inclusive participation:

*"Ensuring that communities are meaningfully involved - not just engaged with."*

*"Engaging with "whole" communities, especially the harder to reach parts of community."*

Finally, we wanted to gauge CPOs' perceptions about how their work is received in communities. As Table 23 shows, only 52% agree that communities react positively to their work. The extent to which this relates to some of the shortcomings explored in this report merits further research.

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<sup>24</sup> This resonates with our experience working with CPOs in the What Works Scotland training on facilitative leadership in community engagement. See <http://whatworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk/2017/05/facilitative-leadership-involving-citizens-and-communities-in-local-decision-making.html>

**Table 23. Communities generally react positively to the work that we do (n = 101)**

Strongly Disagree	3%
Disagree	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	30%
Agree	45%
Strongly Agree	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

All in all, the findings presented in this section resonate strongly with, and add nuance to, the latest report by Audit Scotland:

*The [2012] Statement of Ambition was clear that communities have a key role to play in shaping local public services, but involving communities fully in planning and delivering local services still remains at an early stage in many CPPs.*

(Audit Scotland, 2016, p. 5)

A strong focus of CPPs in their first two decades has been on developing effective arrangements for *collaborative governance* – i.e. governance through partnership between a range of public and third sector organisations. The Community Empowerment Act contains provisions to improve community engagement in CPPs and beyond. Future research must assess the impact of this legislation on transforming CPPs into spaces for *participatory governance* – i.e. governance through partnership between the public and third sectors, as well as meaningful and consequential participation by citizens and community groups.

## Frameworks, policies and reforms affecting community planning

In this final section, we share insights from survey questions that gauged how key national frameworks, policies and reforms are seen by CPOs including:

- National Standards for Community Engagement
- Community Empowerment Act
- National Performance Framework
- Christie Commission
- health and social care integration
- funding cuts to public services

Almost all CPOs were familiar with the National Standards for Community Engagement (96%; n=102), and most (81%) have used them for a variety of purposes (see Table 24). This shows the considerable influence of this framework across this community of practice.

**Table 24. How have you used the National Standards for Community Engagement? Please mark all the options that apply (n = 102)**

To plan community engagement processes	56%
To evaluate community engagement processes	38%
To create community engagement frameworks for the Community Planning Partnership	36%
To create community engagement frameworks for the Council	35%
To monitor community engagement processes	34%
As part of training for colleagues in the Community Planning Partnership	33%
As part of training for colleagues in the Council	26%
I have not used the National Standards for Community Engagement	19%

Regarding the Community Empowerment Act, Table 25 shows that CPOs see its potential to improve CP (72% agree) but don't necessarily understand the implications for their work; nonetheless many feel prepared to implement aspects relevant to them (only 23% feel unprepared). It must be noted here that the timing of this survey (early 2016) coincided with the interim period between the legislation being passed and the implementation guidance being issued. The next wave of the survey will allow us to compare how things have progressed since guidance has been introduced across CPPs.



**Table 25. Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

	<b>I feel that the Community Empowerment Act will improve CP (n=104)</b>	<b>I understand the implications of the Community Empowerment Act for my work (n=103)</b>	<b>I feel prepared to implement the aspects of the Community Empowerment Act that are relevant to me (n=104)</b>
Strongly Disagree	1%	5%	3%
Disagree	4%	11%	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	23%	63%	22%
Agree	55%	21%	44%
Strongly Agree	17%	0%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Responding to ‘Is there anything specific about the Community Empowerment Act that worries you?’ many CPOs mentioned the lack of clarity relating to the implementation of the Act, which is perhaps explained by the timing of the survey prior to the guidance being available. However, nine respondents say they are not worried at all and see it as an important resource for them, e.g.

*“I feel this Act will support me in delivering real outcomes in our communities across the area. This will be my main focus of the next few years.”*

The three main concrete worries were:

- Resources, e.g.  
*“having the resources to respond to certain elements, particularly being able to support communities in deprived areas to take full advantage of the rights given to them in the Act.”*
- The level of cooperation from CP partners, e.g.  
*“Partners not realising they have shared and individual responsibility. I am worried they expect the Council, and my team, to do it all. That is how it has felt so far.”*
- The capacity of communities to engage, e.g.  
*“Capacity for community representatives to suddenly become involved with so many groups now wishing to engage on their services, too many invitations to forums, working groups, so the available resources are spread too thinly to make a real difference. So much information provided it scares them away and that existing staff working in CPP are overwhelmed with too much work.”*

This last issue relates to a more specific concern, namely, that the Act may benefit those communities who are already better off, and therefore further increase inequalities in both influence and outcomes:

*“I am also concerned that it will mostly benefit those communities who are in a better position to benefit from this legislation. Those that are already empowered due to better health, education, access to information etc. Poorer and most vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens will require a much higher level and more support to achieve their goals and better outcomes for their communities.”*

Other concerns were the need to create locality plans, how to develop them and ensure positive outcomes; how the new Act relates to other legislation; and the management of expectations in relation to asset transfer.

**Table 26. In your opinion, is the National Performance Framework a useful guide for CP work? (n = 86)**

Very Useful	16%
Moderately Useful	74%
Not Useful	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

When asked about the relevance of the National Performance Framework (NPF), a large majority of respondents said that they were aware of it (83%; n=103). Only 9% said that the NPF is not useful (see Table 26) albeit this question had a lower response rate. This high level of awareness and sense of usefulness is presumably tied into the experience of developing SOAs/LOIPs and frameworks for monitoring performance at CPP level.

**Table 27. To what extent does the 2011 Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services guide your work? (n = 101)**

To a Great Extent	39%
Somewhat	47%
Very Little	14%
Not at All	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Unsurprisingly, the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (see Christie, 2011) is reported to guide the work of most survey respondents (Table 27). Those who answered positively were asked ‘what aspects of your work have been influenced by the Christie Commission? CPOs mentioned three main areas:

- Fostering collaboration between partners, e.g.

*“It has helped in aligning Services and external organizations to work towards locally driven objectives.”*

- Promoting a focus on prevention.
- Advancing the community engagement agenda, e.g.

*“Encouraging local communities to take greater control over the local agenda and the development of services designed to meet local needs.”*

These were followed by references to tackling inequalities and reactions to funding cuts and reforms, for example:

*“Demand for public services will increase, despite pending funding cuts, but we need to ensure that we strive to tackle inequalities and vulnerabilities. Projections that funding will not return to higher levels until after 2020. Fundamental for ourselves and our partners therefore is to strive creating a culture of continuous improvement and we need to all look at new, more effective ways to be more person-centred.”*

Some CPOs said that the Christie Commission has influenced their entire CP work, particularly mentioning the role it played in creating positions and attracting CPOs to the role. Only two CPOs said that the Commission had no influence on them.

We checked the connection between CP work and the integration of health and social care. When asked about the extent to which they are involved in the development of the new health and social care partnerships (n = 107), most respondents said that very little (36%) or not at all (22%), with a significant minority being involved somewhat (37%) or to a great extent (5%). There were also mixed views on whether integration is well coordinated with CPP work (see Table 28). Finally, just over half of the respondents agreed that integration is progressing well in their area, with a small percentage disagreeing (Table 29). The development of these reforms has been intensive since the survey took place, and therefore the second survey wave may allow us to gauge perceived progress.

**Table 28. Health and Social Care Integration is well coordinated with the CPP work (n = 102)**

Strongly Disagree	5%
Disagree	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	38%
Agree	34%
Strongly Agree	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 29. The journey to Health and Social Care Integration is progressing well in my area (n = 105)**

Strongly Disagree	1%
Disagree	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	37%
Agree	43%
Strongly Agree	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Finally, we asked CPOs about their views on the effect of funding cuts on CPPs and public services. As Table 30 shows, more CPOs agree with the statement that funding cuts are stopping partners from sharing budgets (45%) than disagree (18%). These findings, however, must be placed in the

context of earlier analysis by Audit Scotland (2006, 2011) which shows little evidence of joint working and budget-sharing being prevalent in CPPs prior to the financial crisis, austerity policies and funding cuts. A clear majority of respondents (58%) agree that funding cuts are having negative effects on the relationship between local public services and communities, with only 13% disagreeing (Table 31). We will return to these questions in the second wave of this survey to check how these views are evolving amongst CPOs.

**Table 30. The funding cuts are stopping CP partners from sharing budgets (n = 100)**

Strongly Disagree	2%
Disagree	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	37%
Agree	33%
Strongly Agree	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 31. Funding cuts are negatively affecting the relationships between local public services and communities (n = 98)**

Strongly Disagree	1%
Disagree	12%
Neither agree nor disagree	29%
Agree	41%
Strongly Agree	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Concluding: what next?

Improving the work of CPPs has often meant reforming structures and procedures; the ‘hardware’, to use a computing metaphor. Getting that right is crucial, but perhaps the best-known secret in the world of CPPs, and beyond, is that policy, governance and public service successes and innovations often hinge on the ‘software’: relationships, mindsets, values and ways of working. Community planning officials operate at the heart of local governance, and therefore this survey sought to explore their views on issues related to both the ‘hardware’ and the ‘software’ of CPPs.

The survey was conducted before the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act, and thus the arguments in this report will be of varied relevance to different CPPs. We are aware that some CPPs have already made substantial progress to address some of the issues highlighted here. We had the opportunity to learn about such progress while sharing early drafts of the report with various practitioners and networks. This has helped us to refine the report, but we want to reiterate the limitations of the survey, which was carried out two years ago and cannot reflect more recent developments.

Nevertheless, the report offers an overview of key dynamics, challenges and accomplishments from the perspective of CPOs across the country. This will form the basis for longitudinal analysis after the second wave of the survey in 2018. Comparing both surveys will allow us to gauge the impact of new legislation and ongoing reforms, and to delve deeper into arguments introduced in this report, thus enabling a more robust analysis of the state of local participatory governance in Scotland.

# Appendix

Please note that, in the tables below, decimal points are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

**Table A. Most important aspects of community planning work, according to officers/managers and strategic/local levels (percentage of group selecting aspect in top three) (n = 103).**

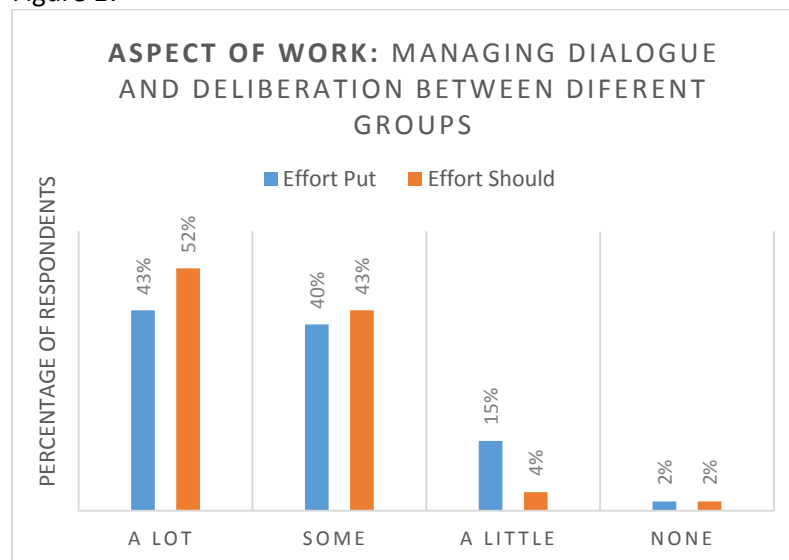
The percentages in the cells below indicate the proportion of respondents, in each of the CPO analytical categories, who consider the practice listed as one of the top three aspects of their work. A cross-tabulation and chi-square test of association was produced for each of the eight aspects of CPO work (given in the binary variable yes, selected aspect in the top three, and no) and the category of interest. For example, a cross tabulation was performed for the binary variable on the 'Managing dialogue' aspect and CPO position either Officer or Manager, and the p-value from the chi square test is recorded in the Sig O/M column. A significance level is set here at the conventional 95% (p-value <= 0.05) and the significance values in bold indicate a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

	Officer	Manager	Sig O/M	Local	Strategic	Sig L/S
Managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups	35%	25%	0.255	27%	31%	0.627
Encouraging 'culture change'	27%	35%	0.432	33%	30%	0.750
Working across various organisational boundaries	57%	65%	0.375	60%	62%	0.876
Working across departmental boundaries in my organisation	22%	38%	0.062	50%	22%	<b>0.005</b>
Using evidence to support policies and projects	27%	17%	0.217	17%	25%	0.376
Involving communities in policy and decision making	51%	52%	0.924	80%	40%	<b>0.000</b>
Planning and managing the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)	37%	40%	0.745	17%	48%	<b>0.003</b>
Performance management and governance	25%	25%	0.954	10%	31%	<b>0.022</b>

**Figures 17-22. Comparison of response patterns of CPOs on how much effort they say they *currently* put into various aspects of their job, and the effort they say they *should* put into that aspect of their job (n = 103).**

The survey questions asked of respondents were: 'How much time and energy do you put into each of these aspects of your work?' and 'How much time and energy do you think you should put into each of these aspects of your work?'

**Figure 17**



**Figure 18**

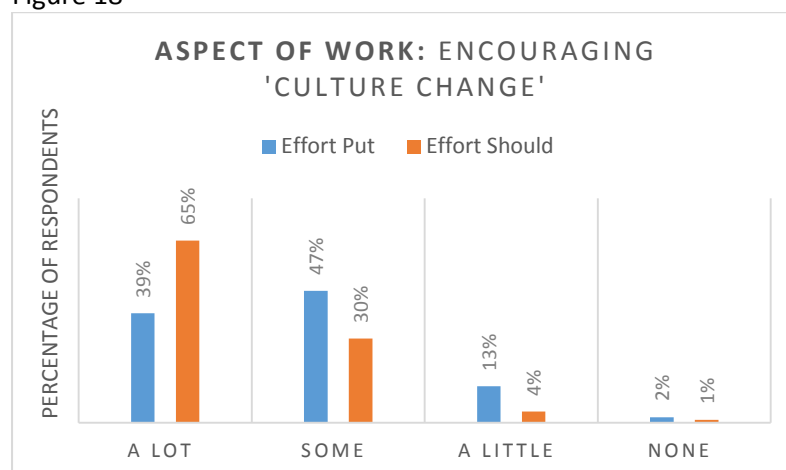


Figure 19

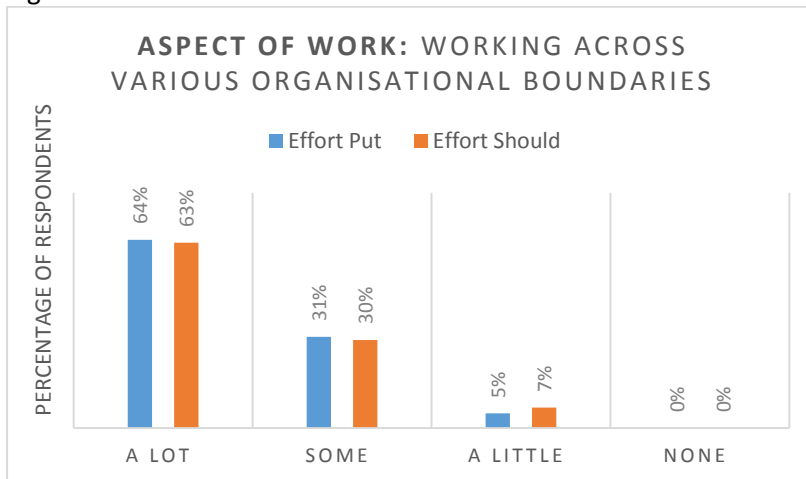


Figure 20

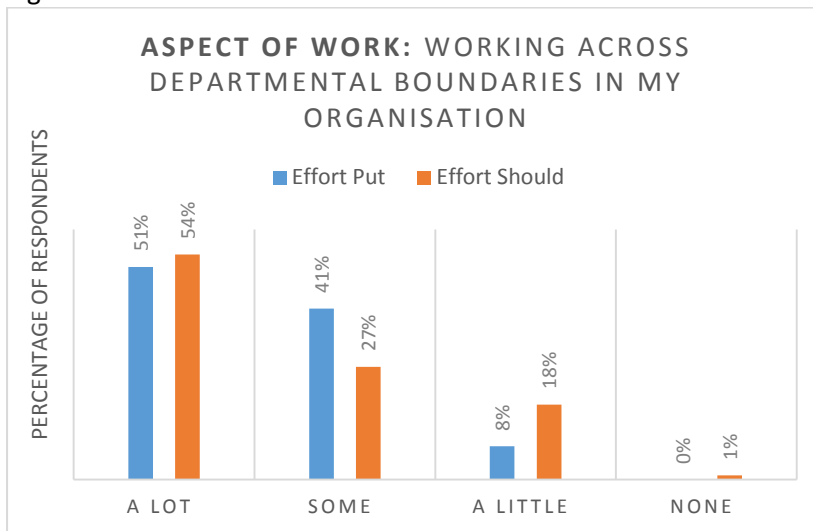


Figure 21

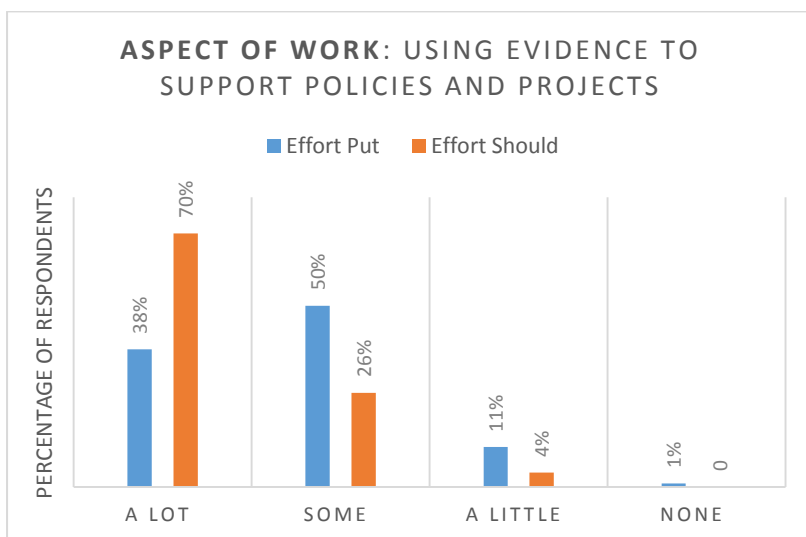
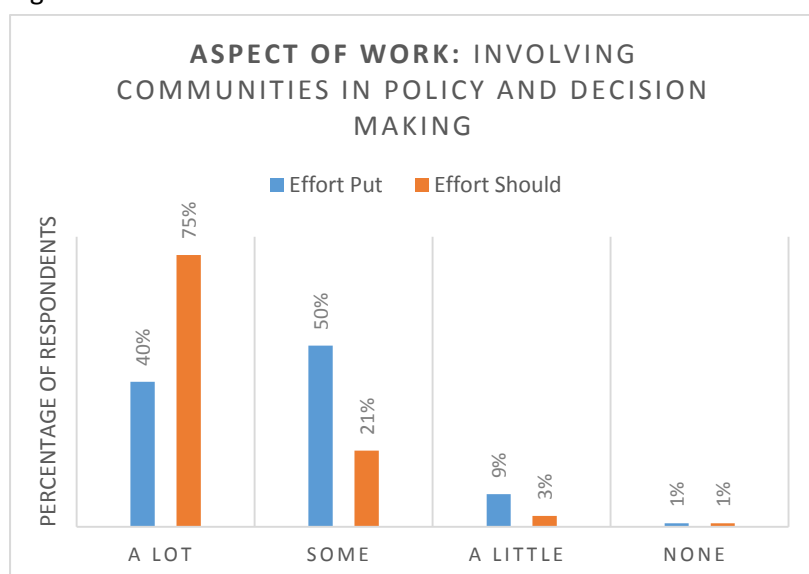




Figure 22



**Table C. Percentages of respondents in each of the 'effort difference' value categories for each aspect of CPO work ) (n = 103)**

As detailed in Figures 17-22, each of the responses from 'A lot' to 'None' on the 'effort should' and 'effort put' questions for each aspect of CPO work was given a numerical value from 1 to 4, with 1 corresponding to 'A lot' and 4 corresponding to 'None'. These numerical values were compared for each respondent by creating a variable indicating the difference in 'effort put' and 'effort should put' on each aspect of CPO work. This value indicates whether there is a mismatch between the amount of effort a respondent says they should put into an aspect of CPO work and the amount of effort they say they put into that aspect of the work.

The 'effort difference' variable was created by subtracting the value of the 'effort put' response from the 'effort should' response on each aspect for each respondent (i.e. Effort should value – Effort put value = Effort difference value). In this variable, a value of 3 means that a respondent selected 'a lot of effort should' (4) and 'no effort put' (1), and a value of -3 mean that a respondent selected 'no effort should' (1) and 'a lot of effort put' (4). The more positive the effort difference value is the more respondents believe that there is less 'effort put' compared to what it 'should' be; values of zero indicate that respondents selected the same response in both 'effort put' and 'effort should' for that aspect of work; and negative values indicate that respondents believe there is more effort put into an aspect than what it should be

When reading this table, it is worthwhile to note the aspects of CPO work with more responses outside of the 0 effort difference value. For example, on the aspect of 'Encourage culture change', the larger percentage of respondents with effort difference values of 1 (32% of respondents) or 2 (9% of respondents) indicates that 41% of respondents believe that they should be putting more effort into this aspect of the work than they are currently.

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Effort diff: Managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups		9%	66%	20%	5%	
Effort diff: Encouraging 'culture change'	1%	10%	48%	32%	9%	
Effort diff: Working across various	2%	18%	62%	15%	3%	

organisational boundaries						
Effort diff: Working across departmental boundaries in my organisation	9%	10%	63%	17%	1%	
Effort diff: Using evidence to support policies and projects		2%	59%	37%	2%	
Effort diff: Involving communities in policy and decision making		4%	55%	37%	3%	1%

**Table D. Means of the 'effort difference' values among the CPO analytical categories (manager/officer and local/strategic) for each aspect of CPO work**

Following from Table C (above), we calculated the averages of the 'effort difference' values for respondents in each category of interest as a way to compare responses on 'effort put' and 'effort should'. For example, the mean of all 51 manager 'effort difference' values on the 'Managing dialogue' aspect is 0.1373 and the mean of all 47 officer 'effort difference' values on the same aspect was 0.3191. A t-test of the equality of means was performed on each of the pairs of means to determine if the means of 'effort difference' for each category should or should not be considered statistically equal. If the significance value was below the threshold of 0.05 we can consider there to be a difference between these two groups on how they view the effort required and given to each aspect of work. For example, there is a significant difference in how managers and officers view the effort expended on Working across departmental boundaries: the negative mean value of managers indicates that in general they believe that more effort is put into that aspect of the work than perhaps should be, while the positive mean value for officers indicates that more effort should be put into the work than what it is now. A significance value of 0.002 indicates that these mean values should be considered

		N	Mean	Sig
Effort diff: Managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups	manager	51	0.1373	0.064
	officer	47	0.3191	
Effort diff: Encouraging 'culture change'	manager	50	0.1200	0.262
	officer	47	0.6383	
Effort diff: Working across various organisational boundaries	manager	52	-0.2115	0.584
	officer	47	0.2340	
<b>Effort diff: Working across departmental boundaries in my organisation</b>	<b>manager</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>-0.3137</b>	<b>0.002</b>
	<b>officer</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0.2174</b>	
Effort diff: Using evidence to support policies and projects	manager	50	0.4600	0.548
	officer	46	0.3261	
<b>Effort diff: Involving communities in policy and decision making</b>	<b>manager</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0.3333</b>	<b>0.025</b>
	<b>officer</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>0.5106</b>	
Effort diff: Managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups	strategic	70	0.1857	0.353
	local	28	0.3214	
Effort diff: Encouraging 'culture change'	strategic	70	0.3571	0.567
	local	27	0.4074	
Effort diff: Working across various	strategic	71	0.0141	0.592

organisational boundaries	local	28	-0.0357	
Effort diff: Working across departmental boundaries in my organisation	strategic	69	-0.0725	0.459
	local	28	-0.0357	
Effort diff: Using evidence to support policies and projects	strategic	70	0.4286	0.726
	local	26	0.3077	
<b>Effort diff: Involving communities in policy and decision making</b>	<b>strategic</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>0.5217</b>	<b>0.001</b>
	<b>local</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0.1724</b>	

**Table E. Percentages of officers/managers and local/strategic roles selecting ‘yes’ when asked about the challenges that CPPs face in the use of evidence and research, and results of chi-square test of association (building on Table 13; n = 107)**

The percentages in the table below indicate the percentage of respondents in each CPO analytical category group who selected ‘yes’ when asked whether they experience a given challenge in the use of evidence and research in their work. A cross-tabulation and chi-square test of association was performed on the binary values of response to each challenge (yes/no) and the binary category of interest (officer/manager or local/strategic) to determine whether responses to the challenge questions are associated with the CPO’s seniority or CPO level of operation. Significant p-values are those below the 95% threshold (p-value <= 0.05) and are in bold.

Challenge	Officer (% yes)	Manager (% yes)	Sig (O/M)	Local (% yes)	Strategic (% yes)	Sig (L/S)	Total All CPOs
We do not have enough capacity / resource to undertake our own research	67%	54%	0.184	57%	62%	0.639	60%
We do not have enough capacity / resource to commission research from others	41%	46%	0.611	43%	44%	0.963	44%
We cannot identify partners who would be willing to work together to build an evidence and research base	8%	11%	0.527	<b>20%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0.024</b>	10%

Officers do not prioritise using evidence and research to inform policy- and decision-making	20%	31%	0.192	30%	23%	0.476	25%
Elected members do not prioritise using evidence and research to inform policy and decision-making	29%	44%	0.119	43%	34%	0.385	37%
Partners do not prioritise using evidence and research to inform policy- and decision-making	14%	21%	0.321	20%	16%	0.665	17%

**Table F. Percentages of officers/managers and local/strategic roles selecting ‘yes’ when asked about the challenges that CPPs face in the use of statistical data, and results of chi-square test of association (building on Table 14; n = 107)**

The percentages in the table below indicate the percentage of respondents in each CPO analytical category group who selected ‘yes’ when asked whether they experience a given challenge in the use of statistical data in their work. A cross-tabulation and chi-square test of association was performed on the binary values of response to each challenge (yes/no) and the binary category of interest (officer/manager or local/strategic) to determine whether responses to the challenge questions are associated with the CPO’s seniority or CPO level of operation. Significant p-values are those below the 95% threshold (p-value ≤ 0.05) and are in bold.

Statistical challenge:	Officer (% yes)	Manager (% yes)	Sig (O/M)	Local (% yes)	Strategic (% yes)	Sig (L/S)	Total All CPOs
We can rarely find data that is applicable to the questions we are seeking to answer	<b>29%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>0.011</b>	20%	19%	0.924	19%
We can rarely find evidence and research that we think is applicable in our circumstances	27%	19%	0.324	30%	20%	0.303	23%

We do not have the capacity/resource to undertake our own data analysis	49%	35%	0.138	37%	44%	0.503	42%
We can rarely find data that is at the appropriate spatial scale	47%	40%	0.495	27%	51%	0.026	44%

**Table G. 'To what extent do people in various CPP meetings engage in the following activities...'? ?**

Respondents who participate in each of the various CPP meeting types shared their opinion on whether participants in each meeting type engage in a variety of activities 'A lot', 'Somewhat', 'Very little' or 'Not at all'. The table below summarises the percentage of respondents who engage in that meeting type in each of the response categories. If an activity does not have a row for 'Not at all' in the table below, no respondents selected that response.

	All	Board	Theme groups	Local forums	Area partnership	Resource planning group
<b>Share information</b>						
A lot	64 %	71%	62%	6%	62%	62%
Some-what	34 %	28%	37%	33%	34%	39%
Very Little	2%	2%	2%	0%	4%	0%
<b>Plan initiatives with partners</b>						
A lot	32 %	26%	31%	35%	44%	35%
Some-what	49 %	51%	50%	48%	35%	62%
Very Little	18 %	21%	19%	18%	21%	4%
Not at All	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Coordinate work</b>						
A lot	25 %	21%	23%	33%	38%	28%
Somewhat	56 %	58%	57%	54%	49%	64%
Very Little	16 %	21%	17%	10%	9%	8%
Not at All	3%	0%	3%	3%	4%	0%
<b>Make decisions</b>						
A lot	26 %	19%	26%	35%	37%	27%
Somewhat	57 %	62%	58%	58%	48%	62%
Very Little	17 %	19%	16%	7%	15%	11%

	%					
<b>Review initiatives from other partners</b>						
A lot	26 %	24%	23%	23%	29%	32%
Somewhat	50 %	55%	59%	55%	50%	60%
Very Little	20 %	17%	15%	20%	17%	8%
Not at All	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%	0%
<b>Share budgets</b>						
A lot	2%	0%	0%	5%	4%	0%
Somewhat	28 %	19%	32%	35%	40%	31%
Very Little	53 %	60%	50%	45%	39%	65%
Not at All	17 %	21%	18%	15%	17%	4%

**Table H. Cross Tabulation of extent of work with Elected Members and response to statement ‘The Elected Members in my area use input from Community Engagement to inform their decisions’**

This cross-tabulation and a chi-square test of association was performed to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between a respondent’s extent of work with Elected Members and whether they believe Elected Members use Community Engagement to inform their decision. There are 27/98 respondents (27.5% of the total sample of respondents, highlighted in blue in the table above) who indicate that they work with Elected Members regularly to organise community events and who also agree or strongly agree that the Elected Members use input from Community Engagement to inform their decisions. 100% of those who strongly agree that Elected Members use community engagement in their decision making have regular work with those members (column: Strongly Agree), and 57% of those who agree with the statement about Elected Members work regularly with Elected Members (column: Agree). The same type of response pattern can be seen in the opposite quadrant of the table, where those with little regular work with Elected Members have more negative or neutral opinions.

A significant result from this test (Chi-square = 53.63, p- value = 0.000) indicates that there is a relationship between these two factors, with a measure of the strength of this association indicating that there is a moderate association between these two factors (Spearman’s correlation = 0.426). In general, we can say that the more that CPO members work with Elected Members, the more positive opinions they have of that Elected Member’s use of Community Engagement to inform their decisions.

			The Elected Members in my area use input from Community Engagement to inform their decisions				
			Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I work with Elected Members regularly	Strongly Disagree	Count	3	3	2	0	8
		% (col)	20.0%	7.5%	5.4%	0.0%	8.2%
	Disagree	Count	7	15	9	0	31
		% (col)	46.7%	37.5%	24.3%	0.0%	31.6%
	Neither	Count	3	9	5	0	17
		% (col)	20.0%	22.5%	13.5%	0.0%	17.3%
	Agree	Count	2	12	20	2	36
		% (col)	13.3%	30.0%	54.1%	33.3%	36.7%
Total		Count	15	40	37	6	98
		% (col)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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